

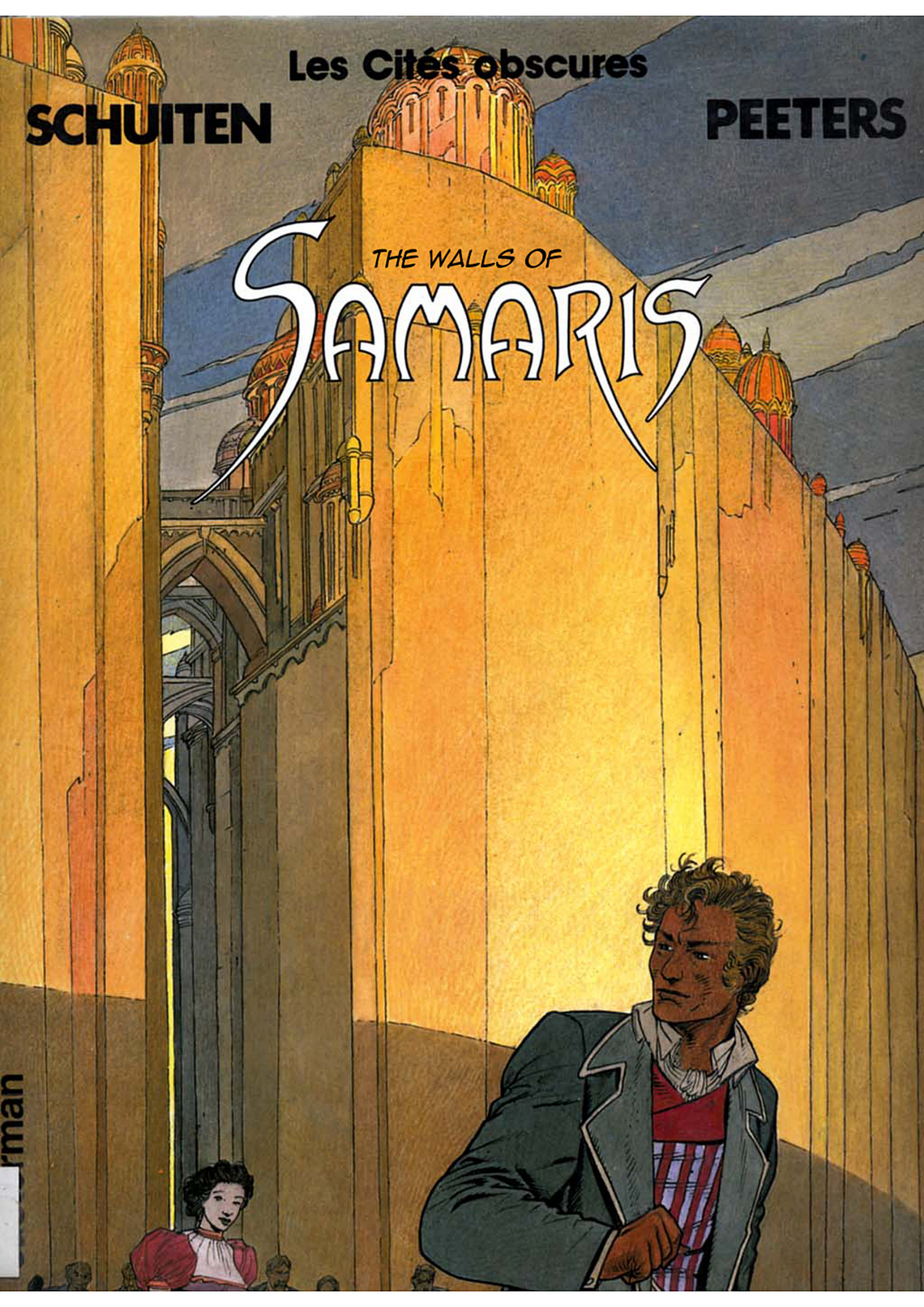
Les Cités obscures

SCHUITEN

PEETERS

THE WALLS OF
SAMARIS

erman



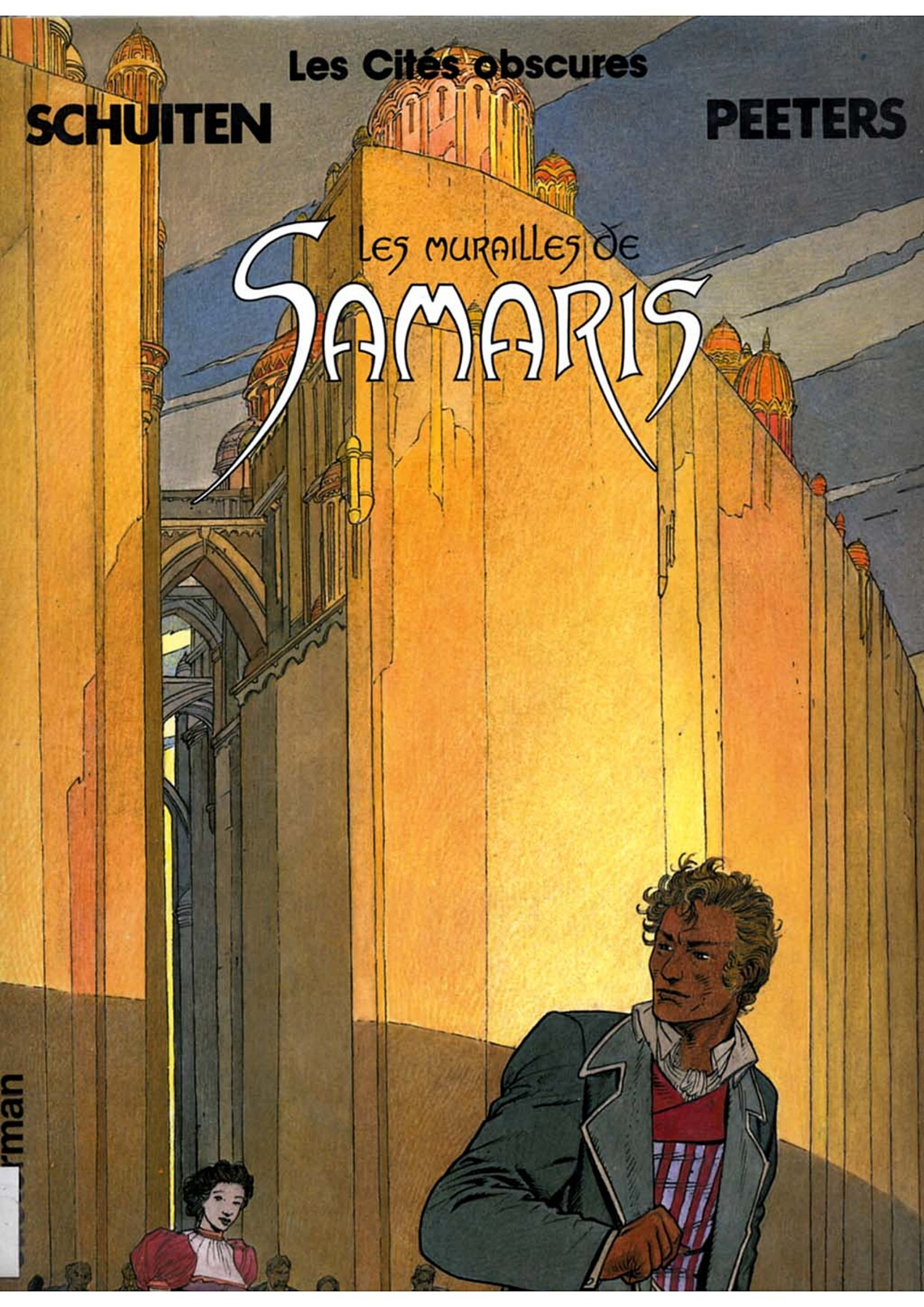
SCHUITEN

Les Cités obscures

PEETERS

LES MURAILLES DE
SAMARIS

erman

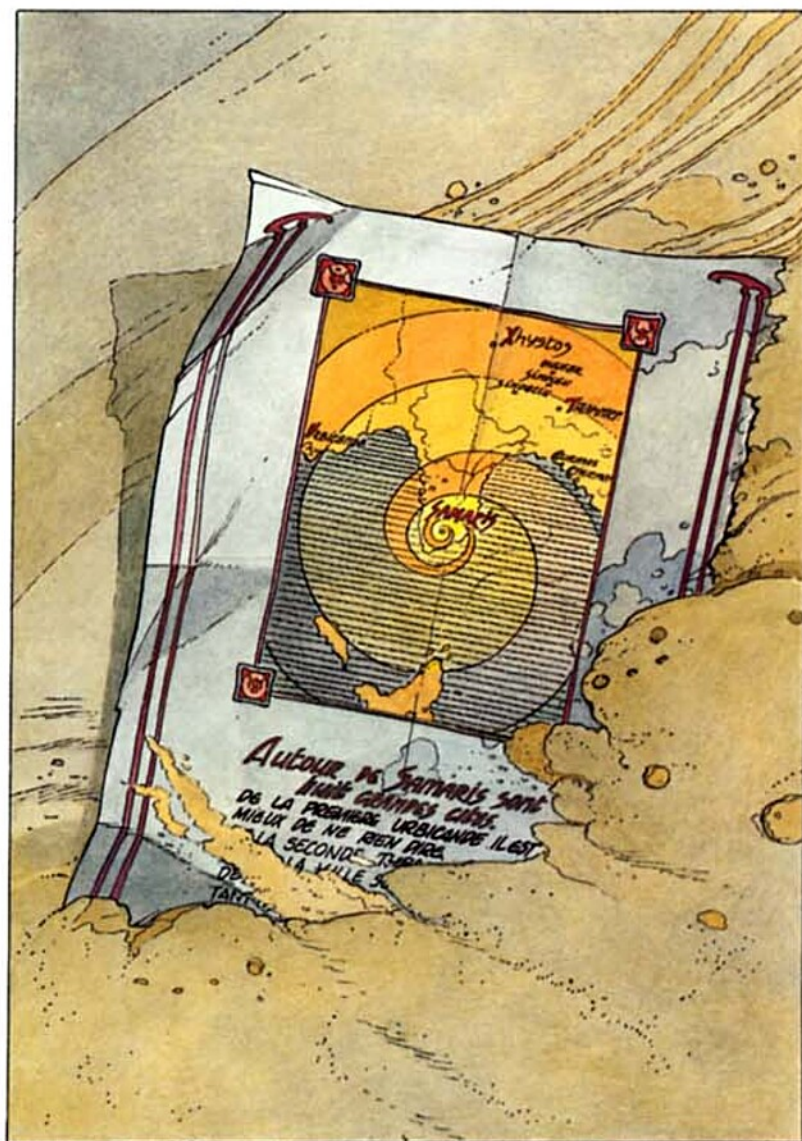


Les Cités obscures

SCHUITEN

PEETERS

LES MURAILLES DE SAMARIS



casterman

Les Cités obscures

SCHUITEN

PEETERS



THIS IS THE FIRST EDITION OF THE WALLS OF SAMARIS. SCHUITEN AND PEETERS RELEASED A SECOND AND REVISED EDITION A FEW YEARS AFTER THE ORIGINAL VERSION.

THE SECOND EDITION CHANGES A LOT OF PLOT DETAILS (THERE IS, FOR EXAMPLE, A NEW ENDING THAT MAKES MORE SENSE - THE ORIGINAL ONE CONFUSED A LOT OF READERS) AND MAKES THE STORY FIT IN BETTER WITH THE OTHER INSTALMENTS IN THE SERIES.

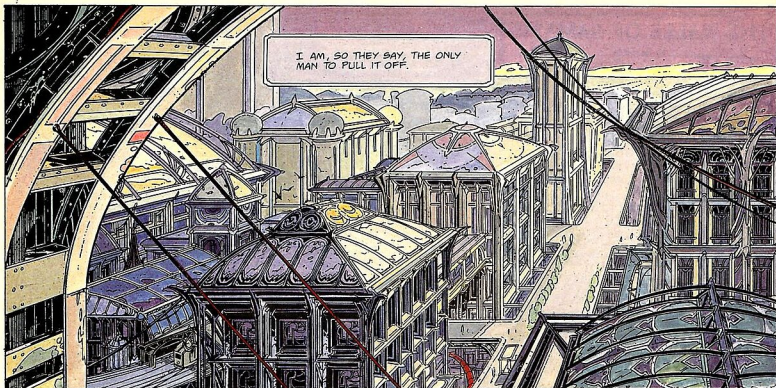
THE SECOND EDITION HAS NOT BEEN TRANSLATED TO ENGLISH YET, BUT SCANS OF THE FRENCH VERSION ARE AVAILABLE ONLINE.

CREDITS

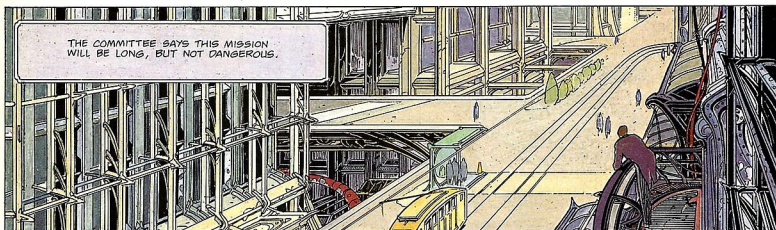
*SCANS (FROM HEAVY METAL)
NOV 84 - MAR 85: LAZARUS (DCP)*

FRENCH PAGES: UNKNOWN SCANNER

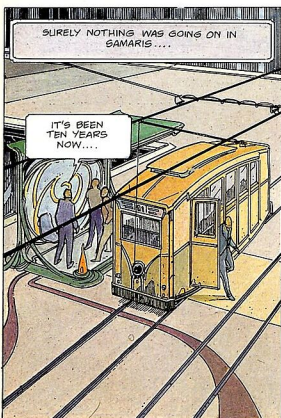
COMPILATION - NICOLAI



I AM, SO THEY SAY, THE ONLY
MAN TO PULL IT OFF.

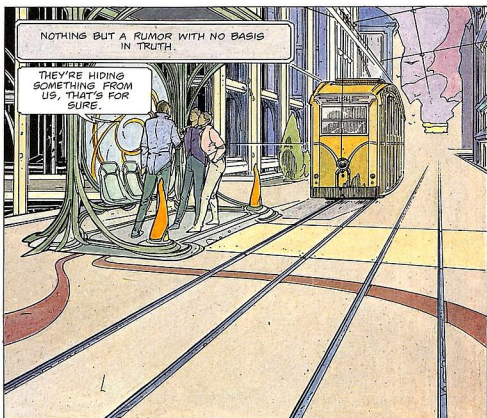


THE COMMITTEE SAYS THIS MISSION
WILL BE LONG, BUT NOT DANGEROUS.



SURELY NOTHING WAS GOING ON IN
SAMARIS....

IT'S BEEN
TEN YEARS
NOW....



NOTHING BUT A RUMOR WITH NO BASIS
IN TRUTH.

THEY'RE HIDING
SOMETHING FROM
US, THAT'S FOR
SURE.

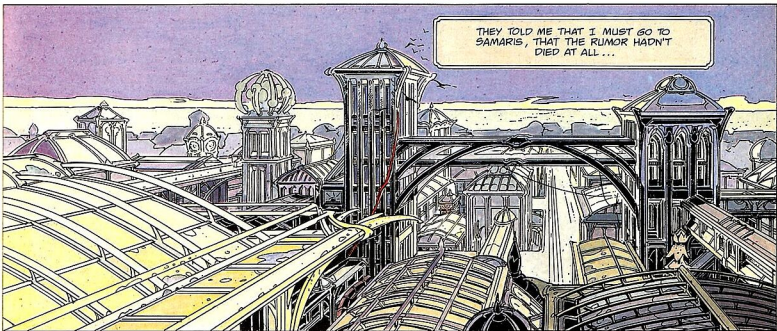
THE WALLS OF SAMARIS

by Schuiten

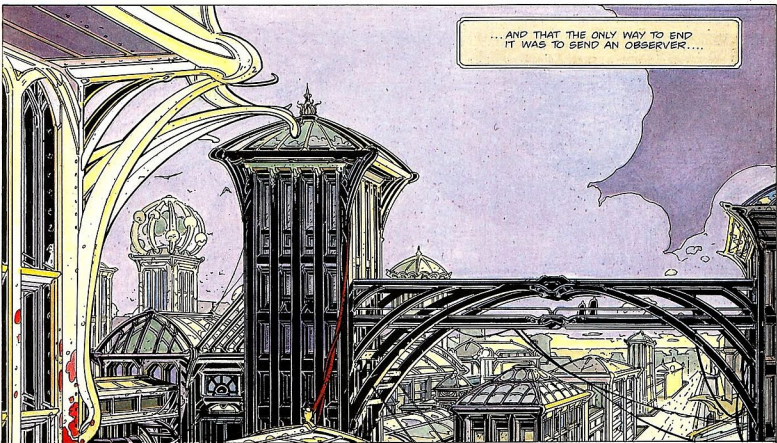
THEY CAME FOR ME
THIS MORNING!

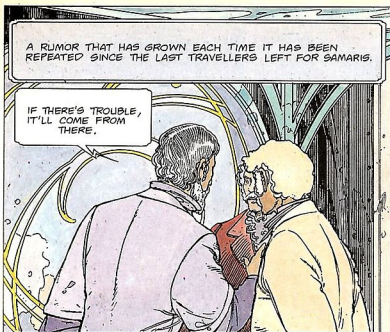


THEY TOLD ME THAT I MUST GO TO
SAMARIS, THAT THE RUMOR HADN'T
DIED AT ALL ...



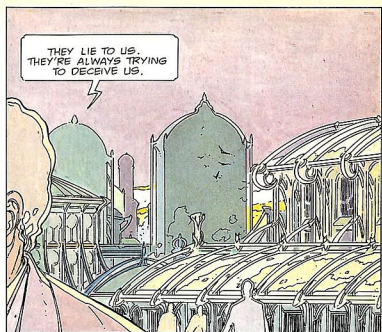
... AND THAT THE ONLY WAY TO END
IT WAS TO SEND AN OBSERVER...



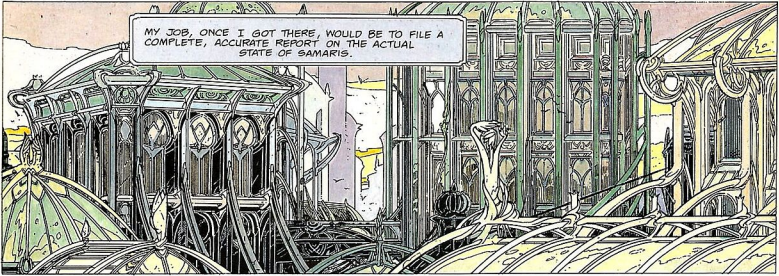
A man with a beard and a purple robe stands with his back to the viewer, looking at an older man with a white beard and a yellow robe. They are in a city with large, ornate domes and arches, many of which are in ruins. A speech bubble from the man in purple says: "A RUMOR THAT HAS GROWN EACH TIME IT HAS BEEN REPEATED SINCE THE LAST TRAVELLERS LEFT FOR SAMARIS."

A RUMOR THAT HAS GROWN EACH TIME IT HAS BEEN REPEATED SINCE THE LAST TRAVELLERS LEFT FOR SAMARIS.

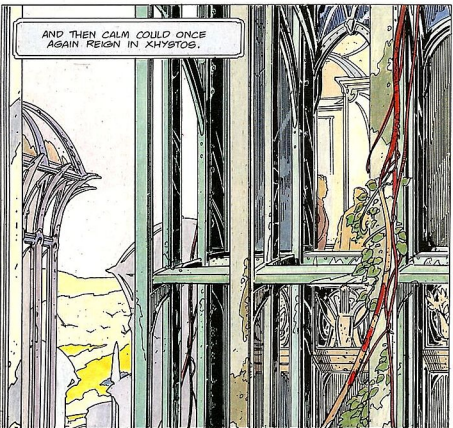
IF THERE'S TROUBLE, IT'LL COME FROM THERE.

A wide shot of a city with large, ornate domes and arches. Many of the structures are in ruins, with debris and smoke in the air. A speech bubble from a man in a yellow robe says: "THEY LIE TO US. THEY'RE ALWAYS TRYING TO DECEIVE US."

THEY LIE TO US. THEY'RE ALWAYS TRYING TO DECEIVE US.

A wide shot of a city with large, ornate domes and arches. Many of the structures are in ruins, with debris and smoke in the air. A speech bubble from a man in a yellow robe says: "MY JOB, ONCE I GOT THERE, WOULD BE TO FILE A COMPLETE, ACCURATE REPORT ON THE ACTUAL STATE OF SAMARIS."

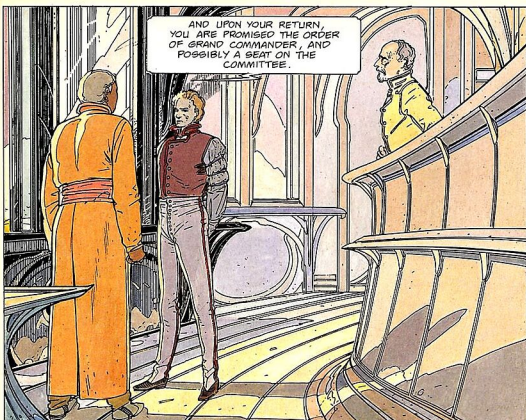
MY JOB, ONCE I GOT THERE, WOULD BE TO FILE A COMPLETE, ACCURATE REPORT ON THE ACTUAL STATE OF SAMARIS.

A wide shot of a city with large, ornate domes and arches. Many of the structures are in ruins, with debris and smoke in the air. A speech bubble from a man in a yellow robe says: "AND THEN CALM COULD ONCE AGAIN REIGN IN KHYSTOS."

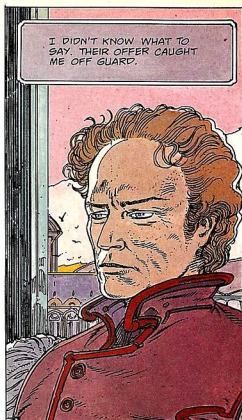
AND THEN CALM COULD ONCE AGAIN REIGN IN KHYSTOS.

A man with a beard and a purple robe stands with his back to the viewer, looking at an older man with a white beard and a yellow robe. They are in a city with large, ornate domes and arches, many of which are in ruins. A speech bubble from the man in purple says: "THE MONEY IS GOOD ON THIS MISSION, PAZ -- \$20,000, AND WE'LL GIVE YOU HALF UP FRONT."

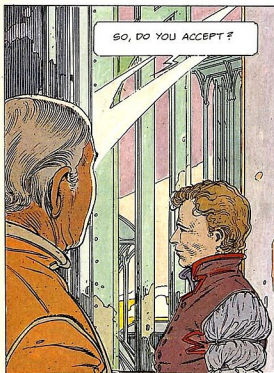
THE MONEY IS GOOD ON THIS MISSION, PAZ -- \$20,000, AND WE'LL GIVE YOU HALF UP FRONT.



AND UPON YOUR RETURN,
YOU ARE PROMISED THE ORDER
OF GRAND COMMANDER, AND
POSSIBLY A SEAT ON THE
COMMITTEE.



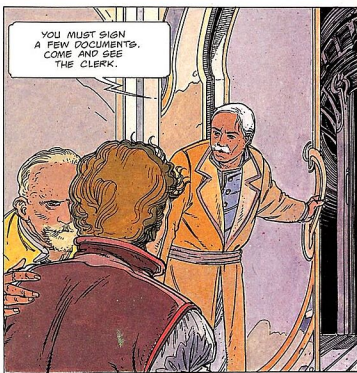
I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT TO
SAY. THEIR OFFER CAUGHT
ME OFF GUARD.



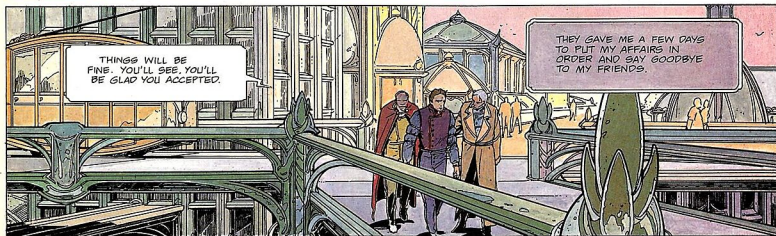
SO, DO YOU ACCEPT?



IF I WERE IN YOUR
SHOES, I WOULDN'T
THINK TWICE.

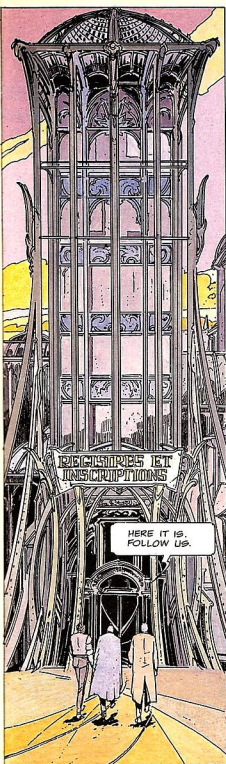


YOU MUST SIGN
A FEW DOCUMENTS.
COME AND SEE
THE CLERK.



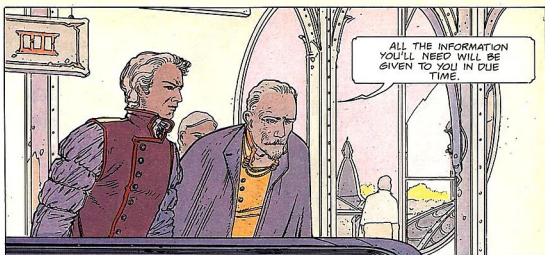
THINGS WILL BE
FINE. YOU'LL SEE, YOU'LL
BE GLAD YOU ACCEPTED.

THEY GAVE ME A FEW DAYS
TO PUT MY AFFAIRS IN
ORDER AND SAY GOODBYE
TO MY FRIENDS.



REGISTRIES ET INSCRIPTIONS

HERE IT IS.
FOLLOW US.



ALL THE INFORMATION
YOU'LL NEED WILL BE
GIVEN TO YOU IN DUE
TIME.



THERE, IT'S
ALL SET.

ALL THAT REMAIN
ARE A FEW
FORMALITIES.

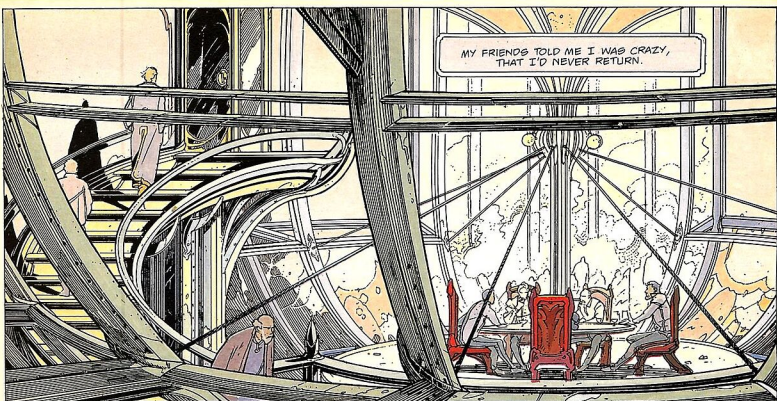


CLAC



I LEFT A HALF HOUR LATER. THE DEAL WAS
IRREVERSIBLE.

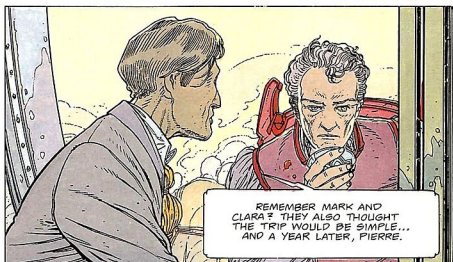
NOT KNOWING QUITE WHAT
TO DO, I HEADED TOWARDS
THE STORK CLUB.



MY FRIENDS TOLD ME I WAS CRAZY,
THAT I'D NEVER RETURN.



BUT REALLY, FRANZ,
WHY DID YOU ACCEPT?

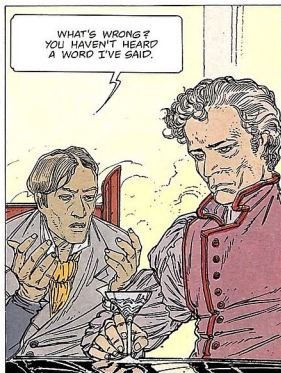


REMEMBER MARK AND
CLARA? THEY ALSO THOUGHT
THE TRIP WOULD BE SIMPLE...
AND A YEAR LATER, PIERRE.

I VAGUELY REMEMBERED PIERRE AND MARK.
BUT CLARA, ANNA'S YOUNGER SISTER, I
KNEW HER WELL.



WHAT'S WRONG?
YOU HAVEN'T HEARD
A WORD I'VE SAID.



WHAT'S WITH HIM
TONIGHT?

I'VE NEVER SEEN
HIM LIKE THIS

YOU DON'T KNOW
WHAT HE JUST SIGNED
...IT'S INSANE.

IF IT WERE ONLY MARK,
PIERRE, AND CLARA, THAT
WOULD BE BAD ENOUGH!
BUT THERE HAVE
BEEN OTHERS.

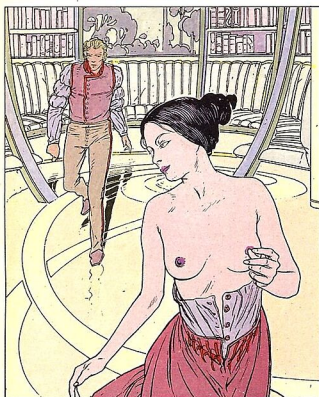
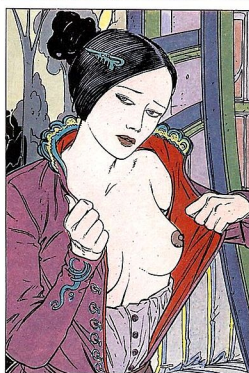
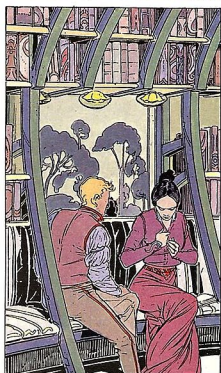
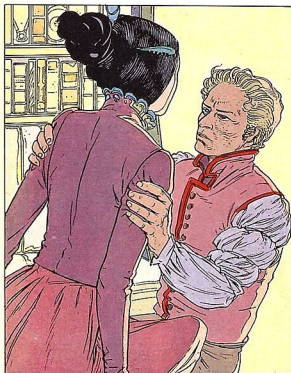
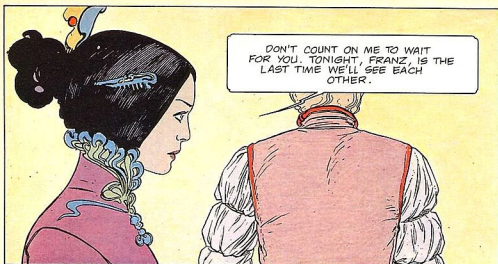
THOSE MORONS REALLY
SCARED ME. I RUSHED
TO ANNA'S.

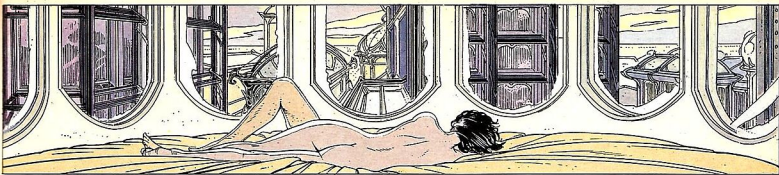
UNFORTUNATELY, THINGS WERE NO
BETTER THERE.

IT'S A ROUTINE MISSION!
I'LL BE BACK IN TWO YEARS,
AND WE'LL BE RICH!

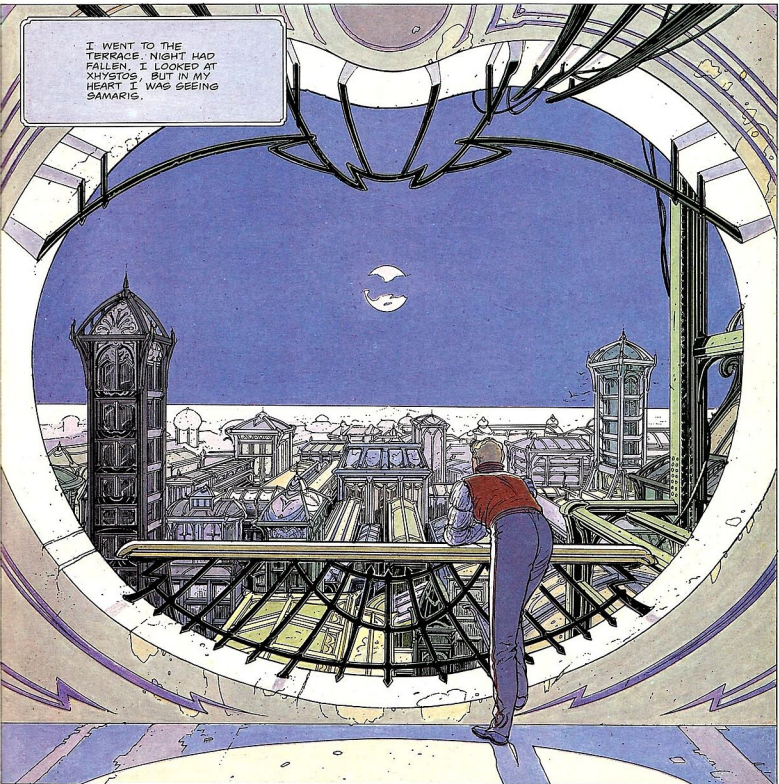
YOU'RE KIDDING YOURSELF.
YOU'LL NEVER COME BACK AND
YOU KNOW IT. THEY'LL
GET YOU, TOO.

WELL, IT'S TOO
LATE NOW ANYWAY. I CAN'T
BREAK MY WORD.





I WENT TO THE
TERRACE, NIGHT HAD
FALLEN. I LOOKED AT
XHYSTOS, BUT IN MY
HEART I WAS SEEING
SAMARIS.



TO BE CONTINUED...

LAST WE READ, FRANZ WAS ABOUT TO LEAVE FOR SAMARIS.

THE DAY HAD COME. I HAD PUT MY THINGS IN ORDER AND PACKED MY SUITCASES.

THE WALLS OF SAMARIS

by Schuiten

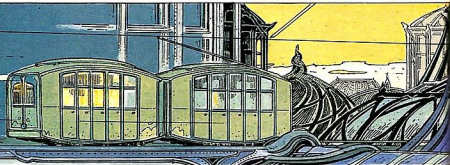
MY FRIENDS ACCOMPANIED ME TO CENTRAL. THEIR ATTITUDE HAD CHANGED COMPLETELY ONCE THEY SAW HOW FIXED I WAS ON GOING.

ANNA WAS INFLEXIBLE. SHE REFUSED TO COME WITH US.

WELL, FRANZ, HAVE A TERRIFIC TRIP.

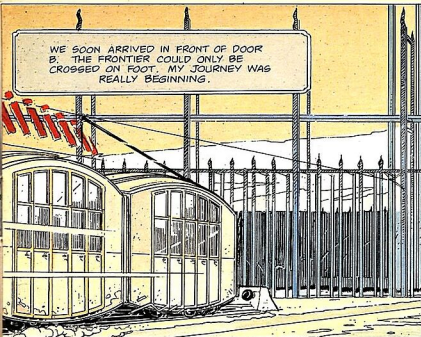
SEE YOU SOON!

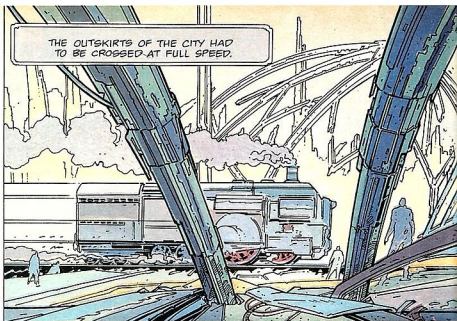
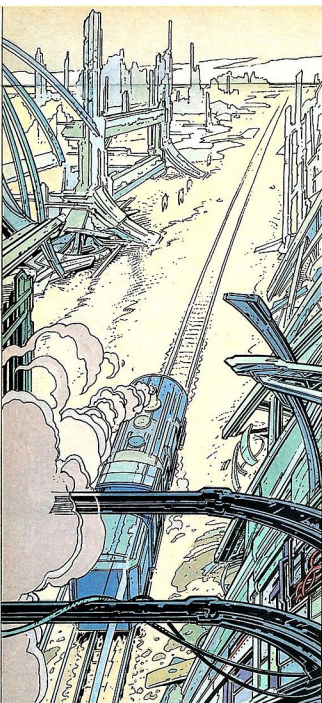
YOU ARE DOING THE RIGHT THING.



THE ROOM IS

THE ATMOSPHERE IN XYSTHOS IS SO OPPRESSIVE.

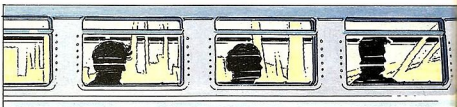




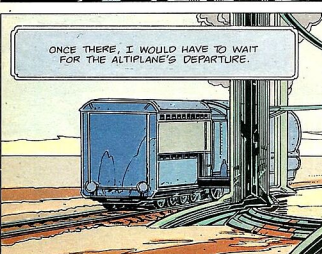
THE OUTSKIRTS OF THE CITY HAD
TO BE CROSSED AT FULL SPEED.



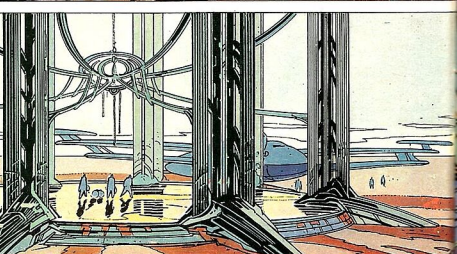
IT WAS NOT UNUSUAL FOR A TRAIN
TO BE ATTACKED BY LOOTERS. THIS
TIME, THANKFULLY NOTHING HAPPENED.

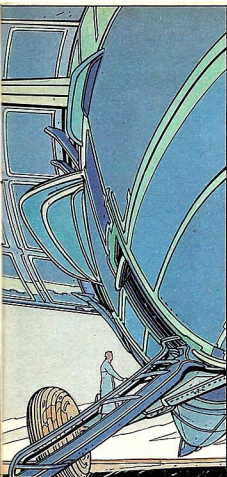


THE TRAIN WAS GOING TO TAKE ME
TO CENTRAL N, AS MY MISSION
INSTRUCTIONS SPECIFIED.



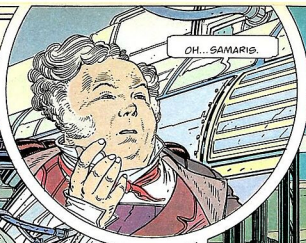
ONCE THERE, I WOULD HAVE TO WAIT
FOR THE ALTIPLANE'S DEPARTURE.



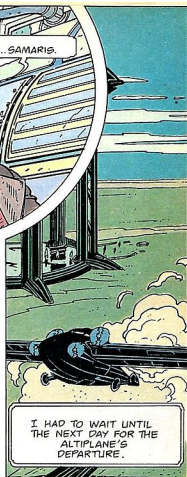


WHERE ARE YOU GOING?

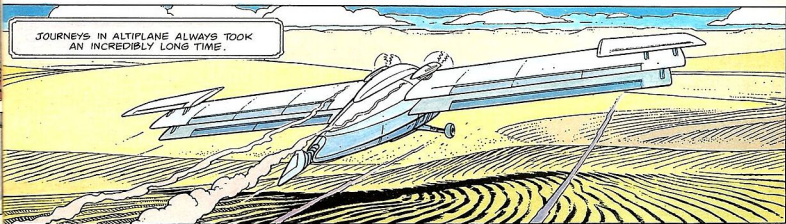
I'M GOING TO SAMARIS.



OH... SAMARIS.



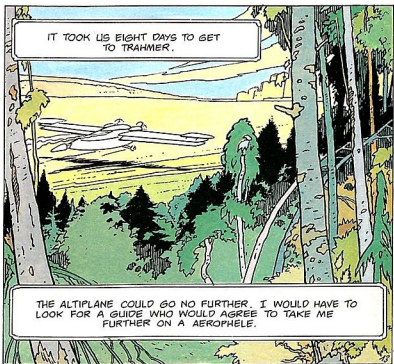
I HAD TO WAIT UNTIL THE NEXT DAY FOR THE ALTIPLANE'S DEPARTURE.



JOURNEYS IN ALTIPLANE ALWAYS TOOK AN INCREDIBLY LONG TIME.

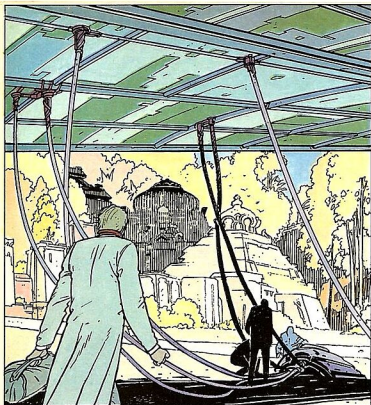


WE COULD ONLY FLY AT VERY LOW ALTITUDES, AND THE AIRCRAFT WAS FORCED TO BYPASS ALL THE CITIES.



IT TOOK US EIGHT DAYS TO GET TO TRAHRMER.

THE ALTIPLANE COULD GO NO FURTHER. I WOULD HAVE TO LOOK FOR A GUIDE WHO WOULD AGREE TO TAKE ME FURTHER ON A AEROPHELE.



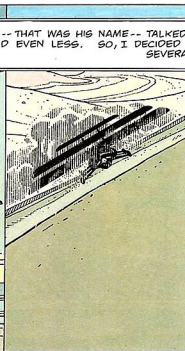
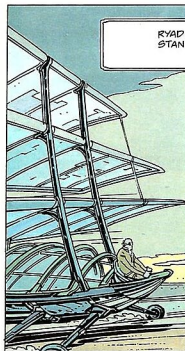
THE NAME SAMARIS SEEMED TO AROUSE ONLY FEAR. THE FIRST TWO GUIDES WITH WHOM I SPOKE REFUSED TO TAKE ME THERE.



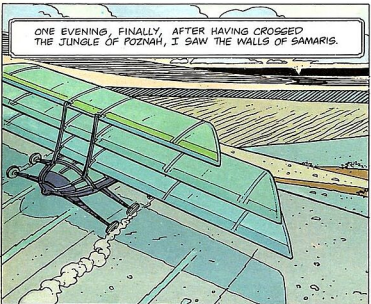
I ENDED UP FINDING ONE, BUT NEEDLESS TO SAY, HE WAS RELUCTANT.



RYAD-- THAT WAS HIS NAME-- TALKED VERY LITTLE AND SEEMED TO UNDERSTAND EVEN LESS. SO, I DECIDED TO BE SILENT. OUR JOURNEY LASTED SEVERAL WEEKS.



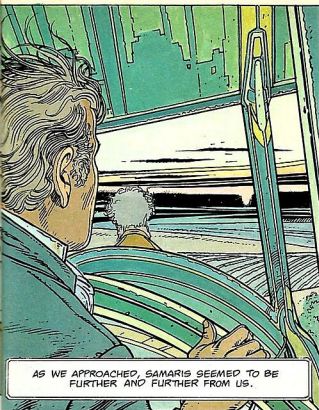
ONE EVENING, FINALLY, AFTER HAVING CROSSED THE JUNGLE OF POZNAH, I SAW THE WALLS OF SAMARIS.



WILL WE GET THERE SOON, RYAD?



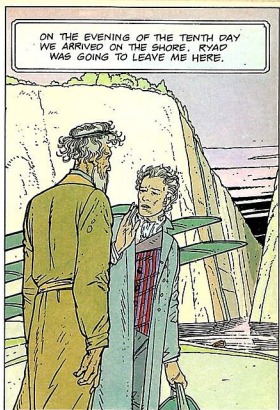
TO MY GREAT SURPRISE, HE COUNTED TWELVE DAYS ON HIS FINGERS.



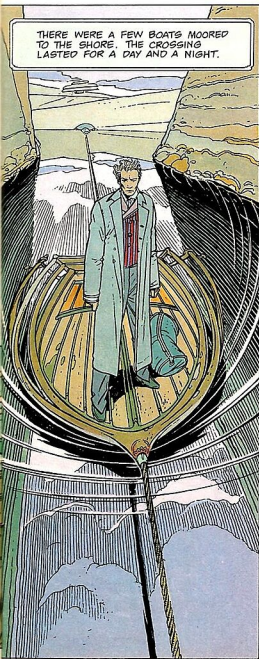
AS WE APPROACHED, SAMARIS SEEMED TO BE FURTHER AND FURTHER FROM US.



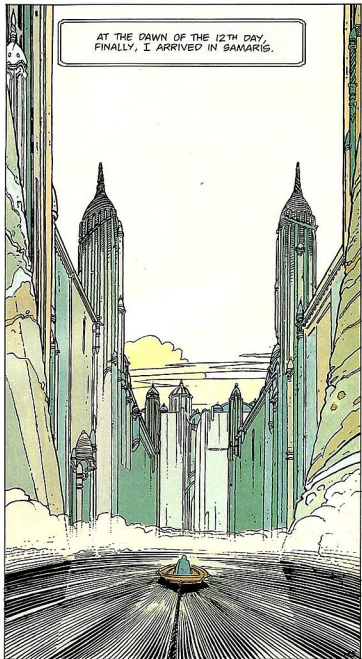
IN THE BEGINNING, I HAD THOUGHT WE WERE QUITE CLOSE, I COULD SEE NOW ALL THAT SEPARATED ME FROM HER.



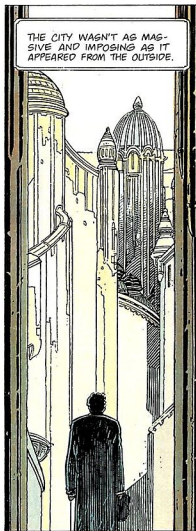
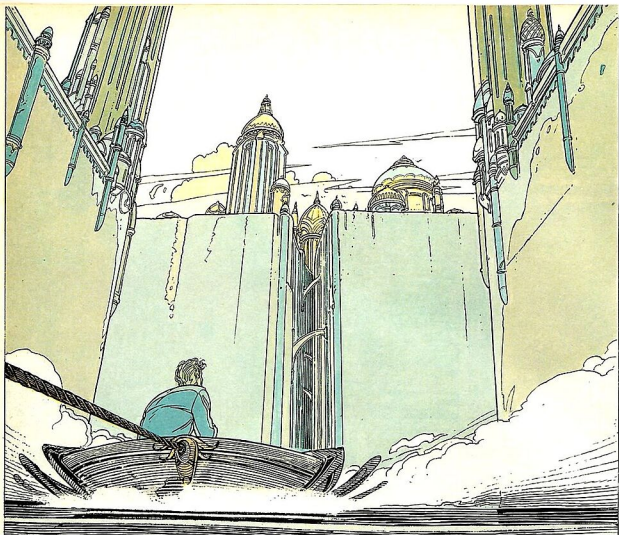
ON THE EVENING OF THE TENTH DAY WE ARRIVED ON THE SHORE. RYAD WAS GOING TO LEAVE ME HERE.



THERE WERE A FEW BOATS MOORED TO THE SHORE. THE CROSSING LASTED FOR A DAY AND A NIGHT.



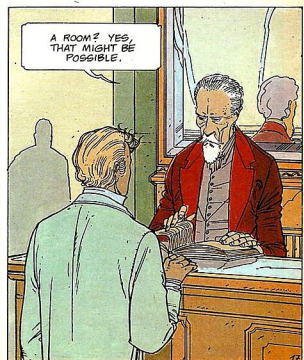
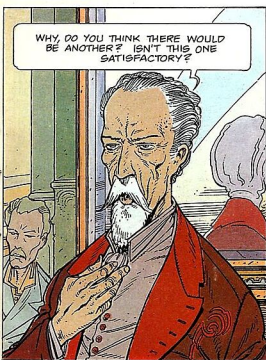
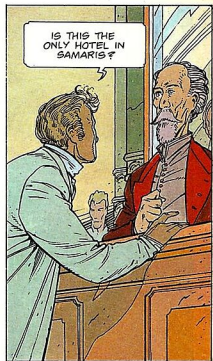
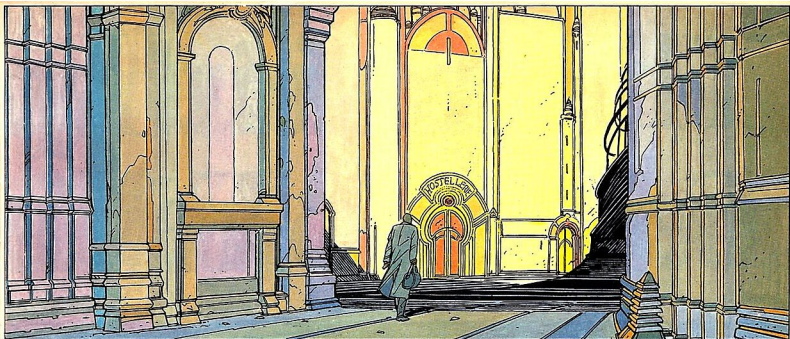
AT THE DAWN OF THE 12TH DAY, FINALLY, I ARRIVED IN SAMARIS.



THE CITY WASN'T AS MAGNIFICENT AND IMPOSING AS IT APPEARED FROM THE OUTSIDE.



MANY DIFFERENT ARCHITECTURAL STYLES SEEMED TO MERGE TOGETHER, AS IF THE CITY HAD CONSERVED TRACES OF ALL THE CIVILIZATIONS SHE HAD SHELTERED.



TO BE CONTINUED

THE WALLS OF SAMARIS

by Schuiten

LAST WE READ, PAZ HAD ARRIVED IN THE BEAUTIFUL CITY OF SAMARIS, AND WAS ABOUT TO SETTLE DOWN IN A NEARBY HOTEL....

HERE IT IS.

DON'T BE SURPRISED IF THE WINDOWS LOOK STRANGE, WE HAD TO BLOCK THEM UP BECAUSE OF THE HUMIDITY.

FINALLY, I HAD THE COURAGE TO ASK THE QUESTION WHICH HAD BEEN ON MY MIND EVER SINCE MY ARRIVAL.

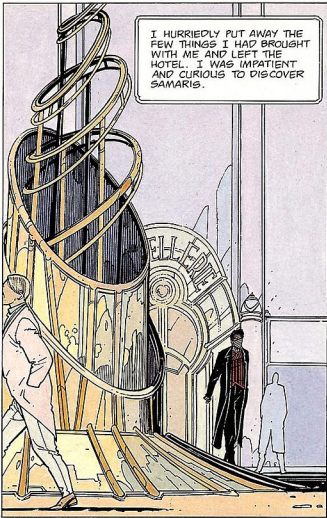
TELL ME, THIS NOISE, THIS HISsing SOUND ALL AROUND US...

WHAT NOISE? I CAN'T HEAR ANY NOISE.

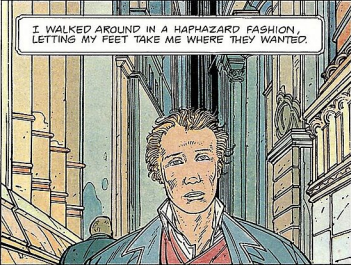
AS IF TO CONFIRM HIS WORDS, THE HISsing SOUND CEASED.

OH WELL, I MUST HAVE MADE A MISTAKE. EXCUSE ME.

I HOPE YOU WILL HAVE A GOOD TIME IN SAMARIS.

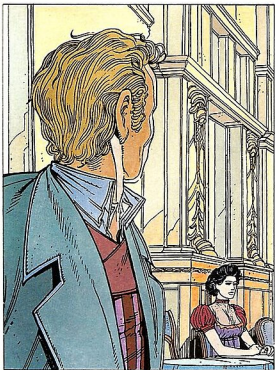
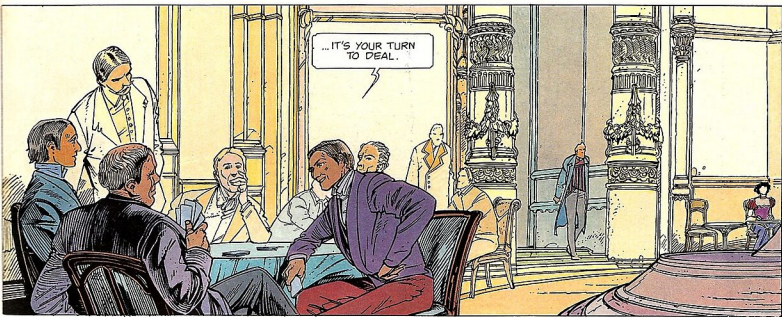


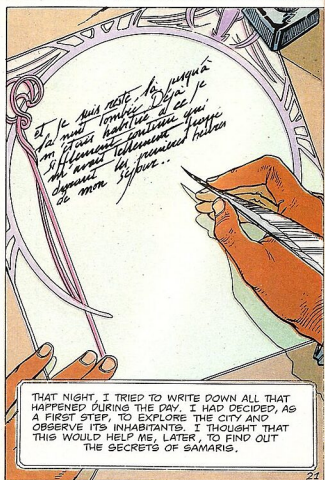
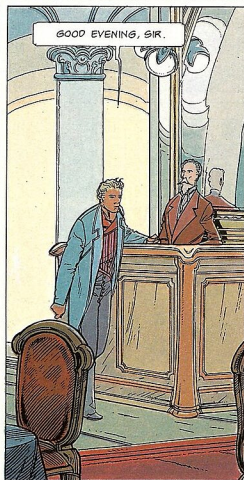
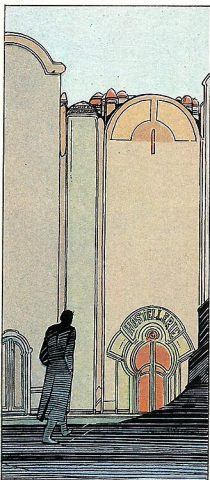
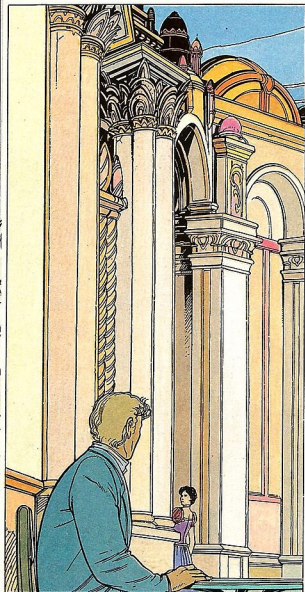
I HURRIEDLY PUT AWAY THE FEW THINGS I HAD BROUGHT WITH ME AND LEFT THE HOTEL. I WAS IMPATIENT AND CURIOUS TO DISCOVER SAMARIS.



I WALKED AROUND IN A HAPHAZARD FASHION, LETTING MY FEET TAKE ME WHERE THEY WANTED.







THE CITY WAS FULL OF SURPRISES AND SEEMED TO BE WILLING TO REVEAL ITS SECRETS ONLY TO A PERSON WHO WAS WILLING TO TAKE HIS TIME.

I COULD HAVE SWORN I HAD NEVER SEEN THE STAIRS AND THE ALLEY WHICH SUDDENLY OPENED UP BEFORE MY EYES.

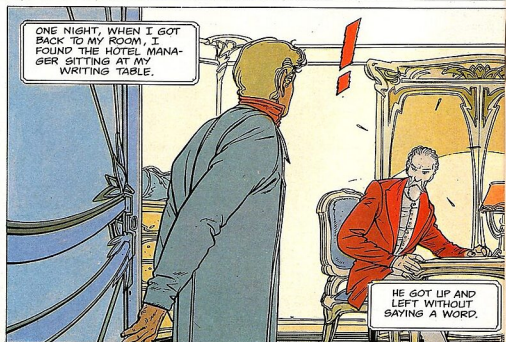
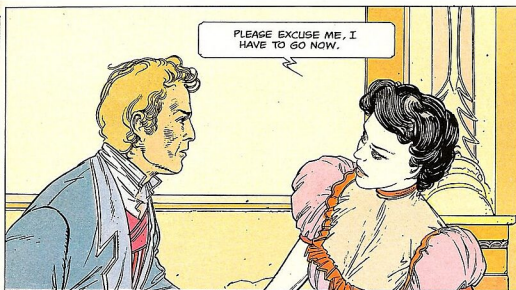
I MET CARLA EVERYDAY AT THE DOOR, ARRIVING EACH AFTERNOON A LITTLE EARLIER. I DON'T THINK EITHER OF US REALLY KNEW WHY WE MET.

IT'S YOUR TURN TO DEAL.

GOOD AFTERNOON, CARLA.

GOOD AFTERNOON, HOW ARE YOU?

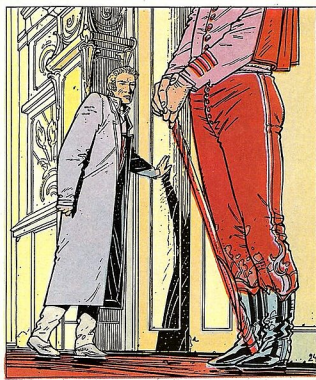
OUR MEETING ALWAYS ENDED IN THE SAME WAY, AT THE SAME TIME.

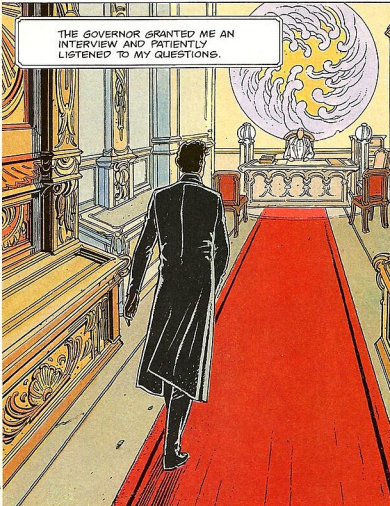


I HAD ARRIVED IN SAMARIS NEARLY THREE WEEKS AGO. SINCE THEN, I WAS FORCED TO ADMIT, I HADN'T REALLY ACCOMPLISHED MUCH.

I HADN'T NOTICED ANYTHING REALLY SUSPICIOUS, YET THE CITY STILL IMPRESSED ME AS BEING SLIGHTLY BIZARRE.

I DECIDED TO ADOPT A DIFFERENT TACTIC AND TO TRY TO MEET THE GOVERNOR.

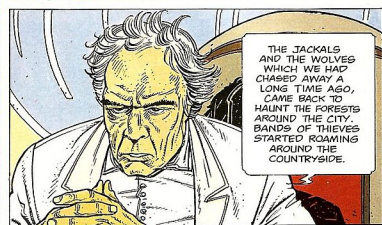




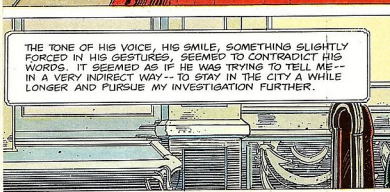
THE GOVERNOR GRANTED ME AN INTERVIEW AND PATIENTLY LISTENED TO MY QUESTIONS.



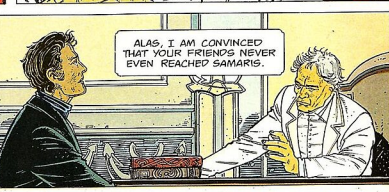
THE TRAVELLERS YOU MENTION NEVER REACHED SAMARIS. LAST WINTER WAS A PARTICULARLY HARD ONE.



THE JACKALS AND THE WOLVES WHICH WE HAD CHASED AWAY A LONG TIME AGO, CAME BACK TO HAUNT THE FORESTS AROUND THE CITY. BANDS OF THIEVES STARTED ROAMING AROUND THE COUNTRYSIDE.



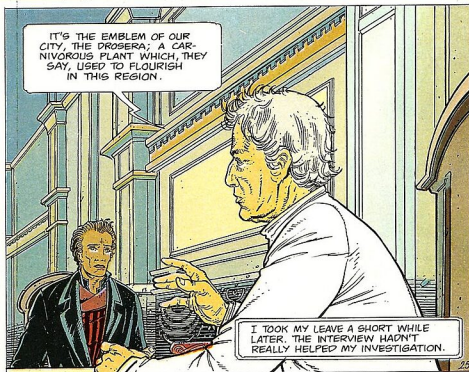
THE TONE OF HIS VOICE, HIS SMILE, SOMETHING SLIGHTLY FORCED IN HIS GESTURES, SEEMED TO CONTRADICT HIS WORDS. IT SEEMED AS IF HE WAS TRYING TO TELL ME-- IN A VERY INDIRECT WAY-- TO STAY IN THE CITY A WHILE LONGER AND PURSUE MY INVESTIGATION FURTHER.



ALAS, I AM CONVINCED THAT YOUR FRIENDS NEVER EVEN REACHED SAMARIS.

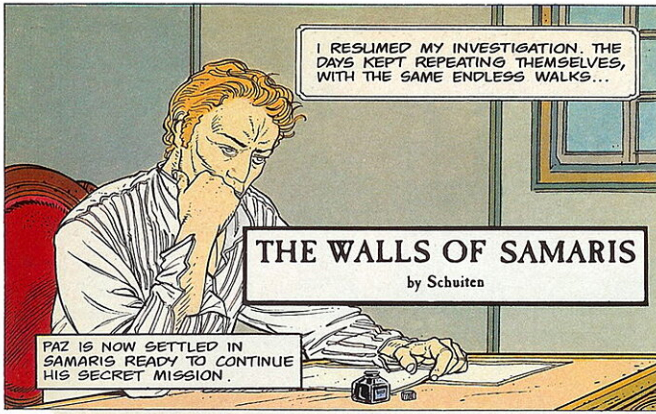


WHAT DOES THE ENGRAVING BEHIND YOU REPRESENT?



IT'S THE EMBLEM OF OUR CITY, THE DROSERA; A CARNIVOROUS PLANT WHICH, THEY SAY, USED TO FLOURISH IN THIS REGION.

I TOOK MY LEAVE A SHORT WHILE LATER. THE INTERVIEW HADN'T REALLY HELPED MY INVESTIGATION.



I RESUMED MY INVESTIGATION. THE DAYS KEPT REPEATING THEMSELVES, WITH THE SAME ENDLESS WALKS...

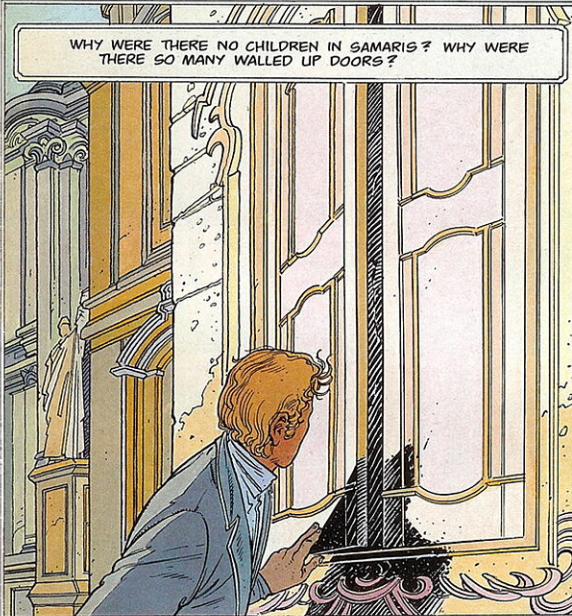
THE WALLS OF SAMARIS

by Schuiten

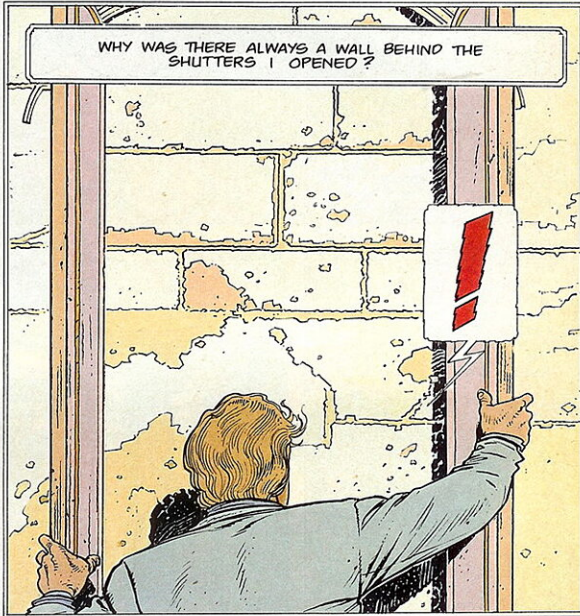
PAZ IS NOW SETTLED IN SAMARIS READY TO CONTINUE HIS SECRET MISSION.



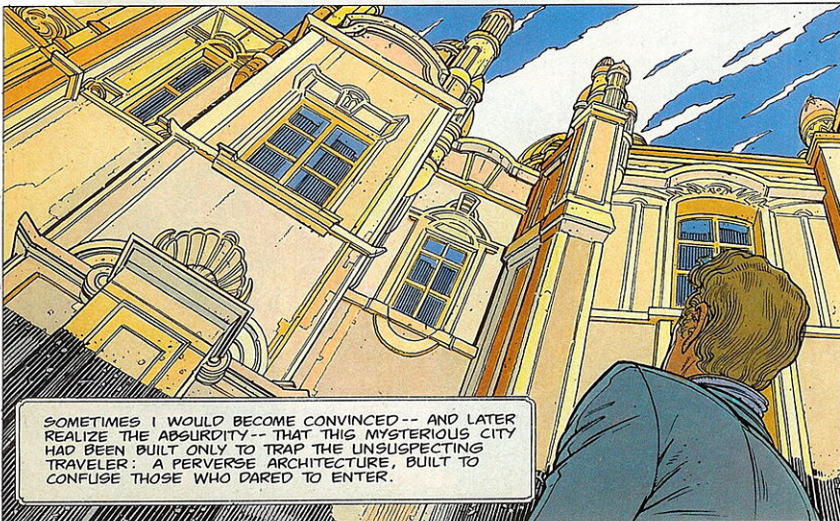
...THE SAME CONVERSATIONS, AND THAT ALL PERVADING FEELING OF UNEASINESS. I KEPT ASKING MYSELF THE SAME QUESTIONS, UNTIL THEY BECAME AN OBSESSION.



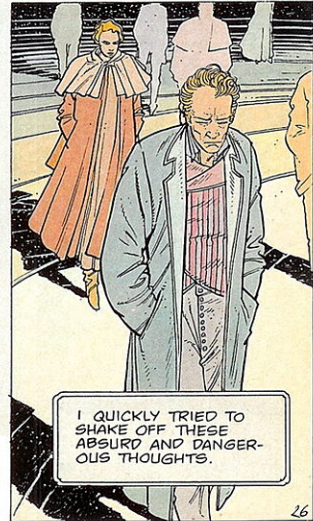
WHY WERE THERE NO CHILDREN IN SAMARIS? WHY WERE THERE SO MANY WALLED UP DOORS?



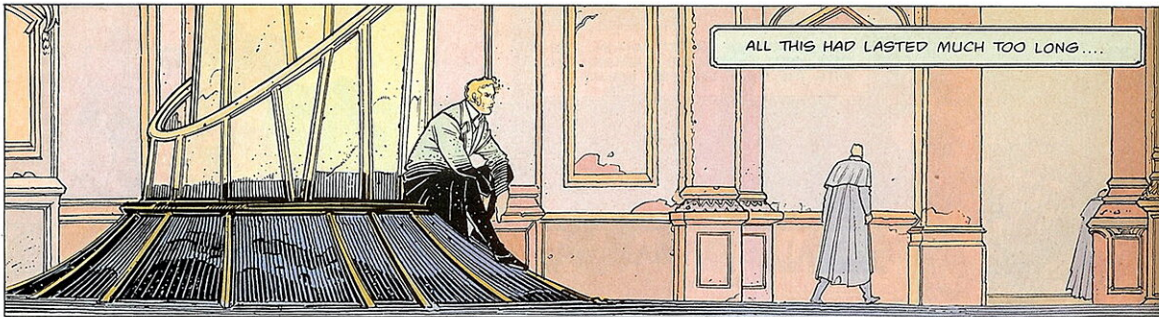
WHY WAS THERE ALWAYS A WALL BEHIND THE SHUTTERS I OPENED?



SOMETIMES I WOULD BECOME CONVINCED-- AND LATER REALIZE THE ABSURDITY-- THAT THIS MYSTERIOUS CITY HAD BEEN BUILT ONLY TO TRAP THE UNSUSPECTING TRAVELER: A PERVERSE ARCHITECTURE, BUILT TO CONFUSE THOSE WHO DARED TO ENTER.



I QUICKLY TRIED TO SHAKE OFF THESE ABSURD AND DANGEROUS THOUGHTS.



ALL THIS HAD LASTED MUCH TOO LONG....

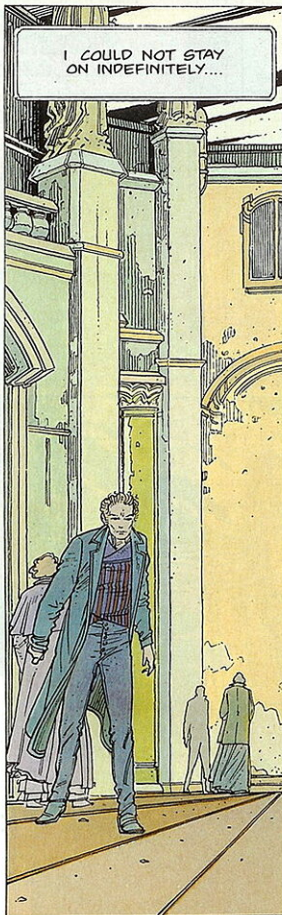


I WAS SLOWLY LOSING ALL MY STRENGTH, AND BECOMING PREY TO A STUPOR WHICH I COULDN'T SHAKE OFF. AT FIRST, I THOUGHT IT MIGHT BE THE CLIMATE.



I BEGAN TO LOOK AND ACT LIKE ALL THE OTHER INHABITANTS OF SAMARIS: I BECAME A LETHARGIC WANDERER EXPLORING THE SAME LITTLE STREETS EVERY DAY.

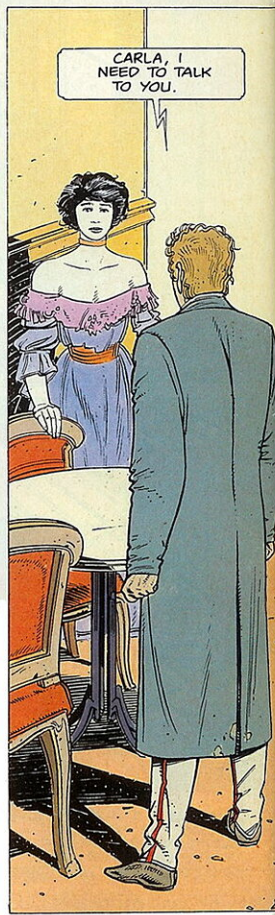
I CAN'T GO ON LIKE THIS.



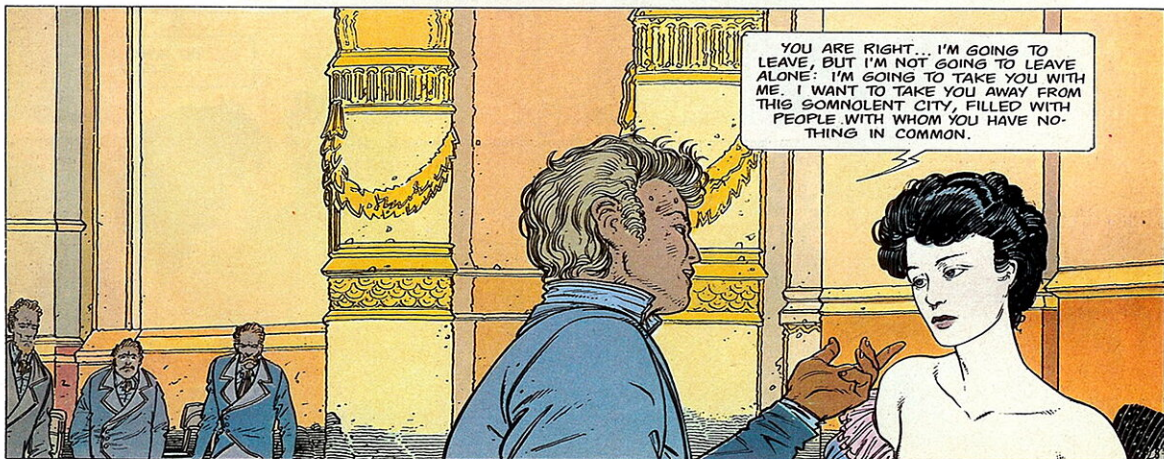
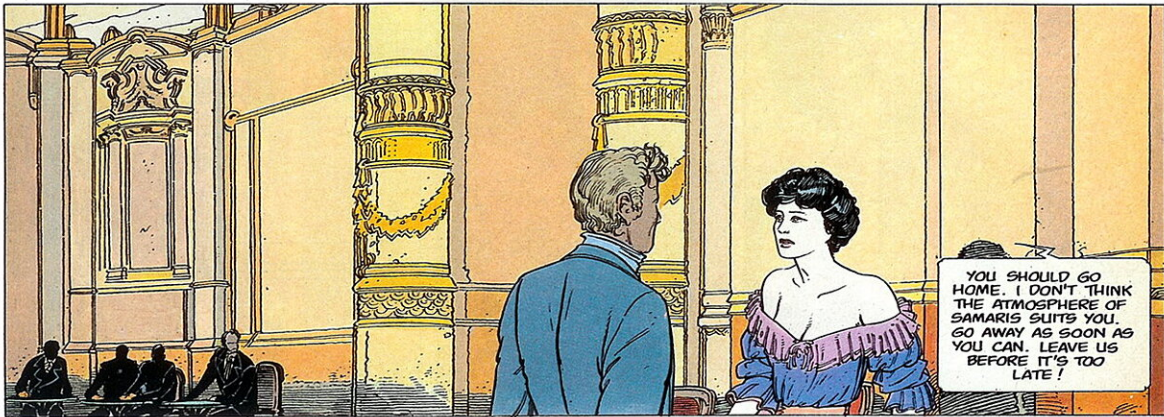
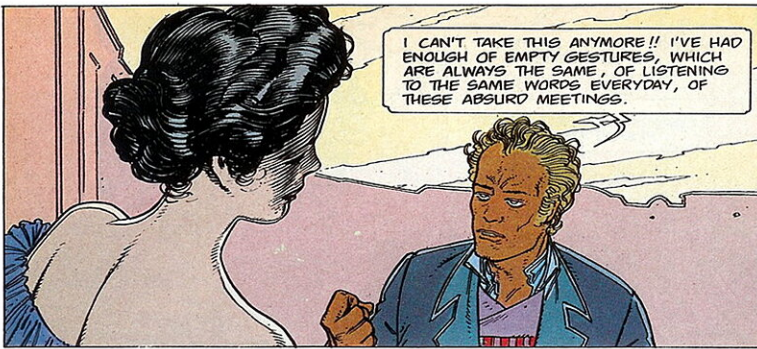
I COULD NOT STAY ON INDEFINITELY....

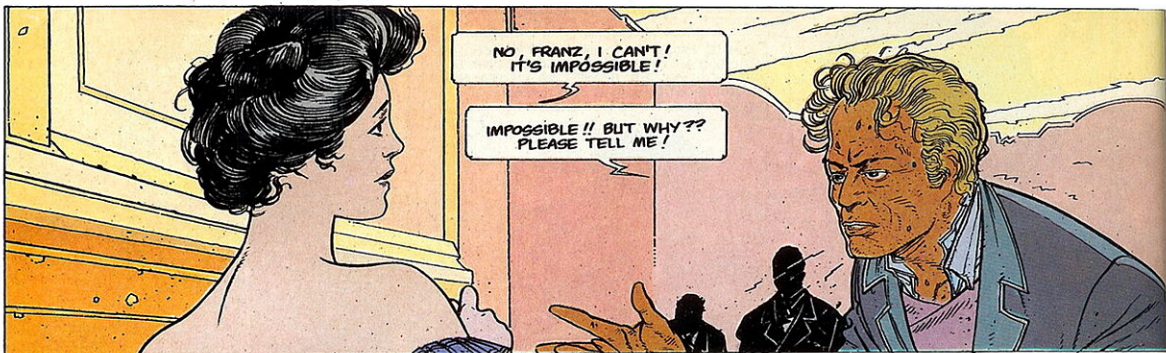


I DECIDED THAT I WOULD TALK TO HER BEFORE I LEFT THE CITY AND THAT I WOULD TRY TO CONVINCE HER TO COME WITH ME.

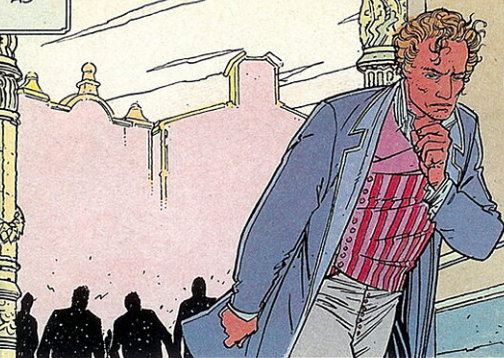


CARLA, I NEED TO TALK TO YOU.





THAT VIOLENT SCENE ACTED AS
A CATALYST.



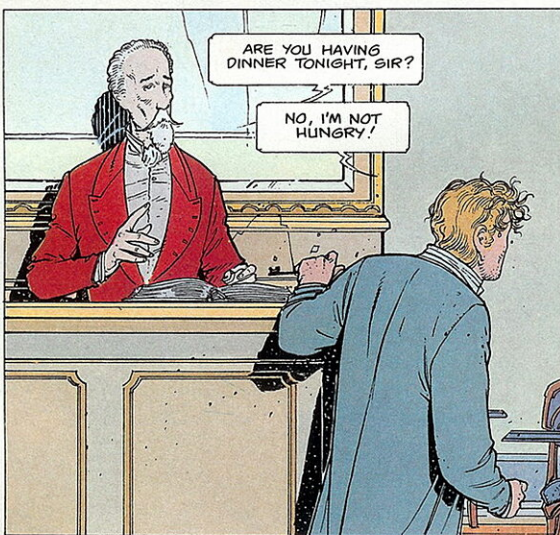
IT REVEALED TO ME,
SUDDENLY, MORE THAN I
HAD LEARNED DURING
ALL OF THE PRE-
CEDING WEEKS.

I DECIDED TO STAY UP ALL NIGHT. MAYBE, IF I STAYED
AWAKE, SAMARIS WOULD REVEAL ITS SECRET.

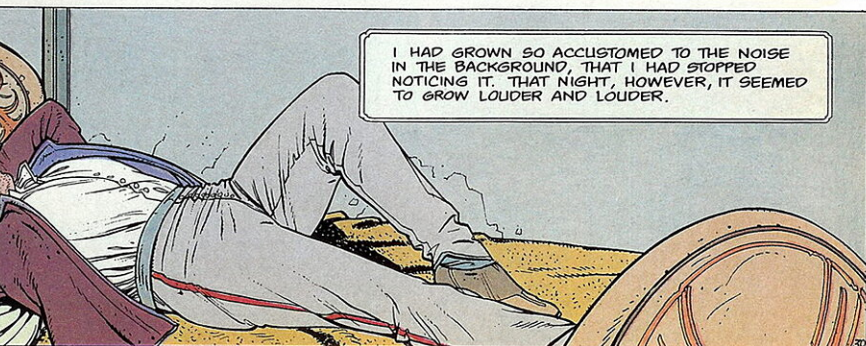


ARE YOU HAVING
DINNER TONIGHT, SIR?

NO, I'M NOT
HUNGRY!



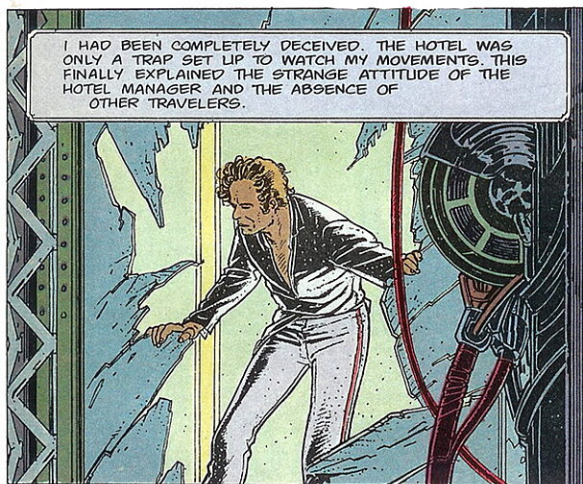
I HAD GROWN SO ACCUSTOMED TO THE NOISE
IN THE BACKGROUND, THAT I HAD STOPPED
NOTICING IT. THAT NIGHT, HOWEVER, IT SEEMED
TO GROW LOUDER AND LOUDER.



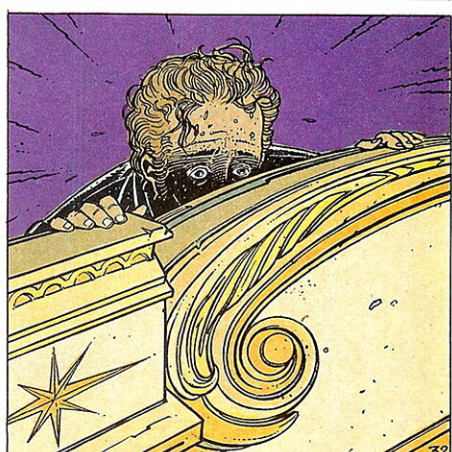
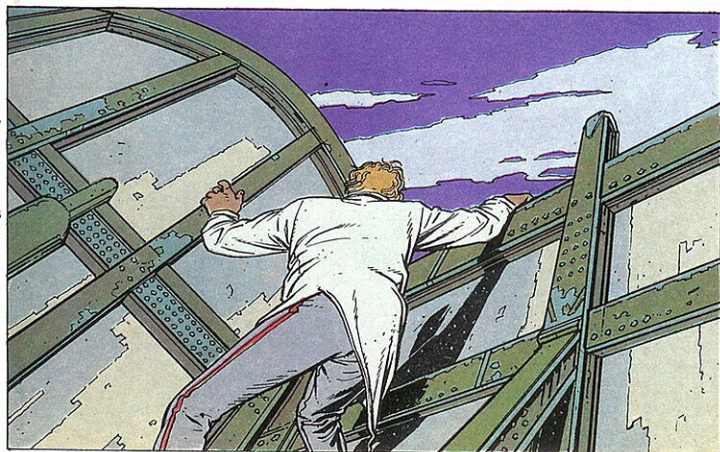
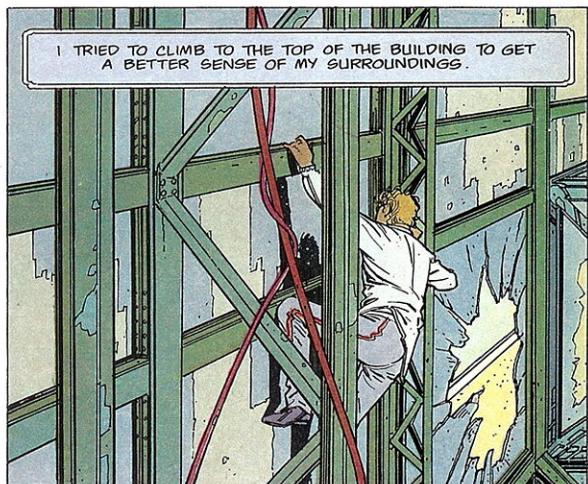
GOOD GRIEF!
MY ROOM!

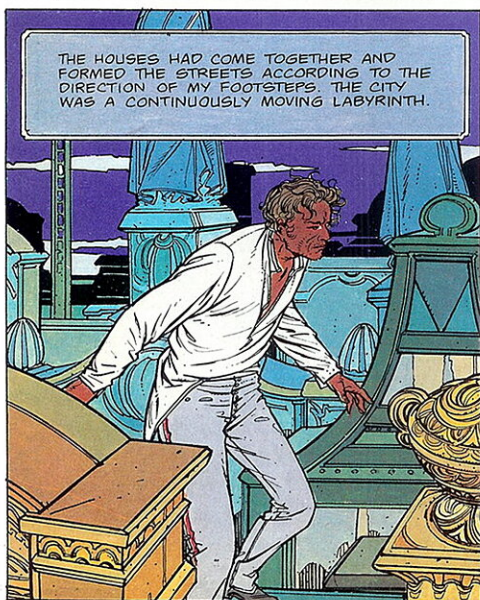
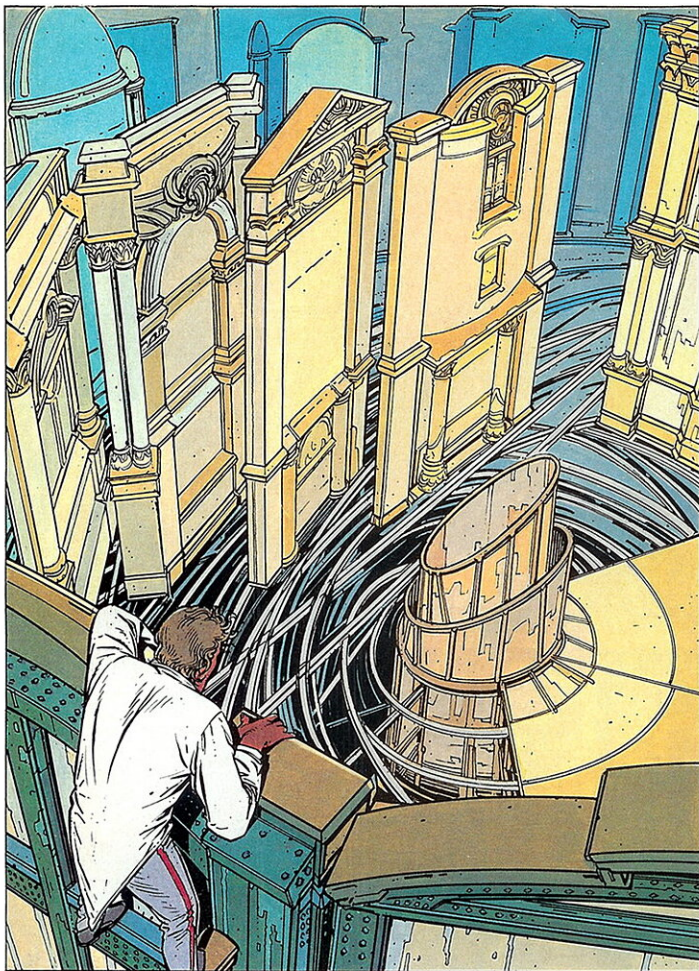


I HAD BEEN COMPLETELY DECEIVED. THE HOTEL WAS ONLY A TRAP SET UP TO WATCH MY MOVEMENTS. THIS FINALLY EXPLAINED THE STRANGE ATTITUDE OF THE HOTEL MANAGER AND THE ABSENCE OF OTHER TRAVELERS.



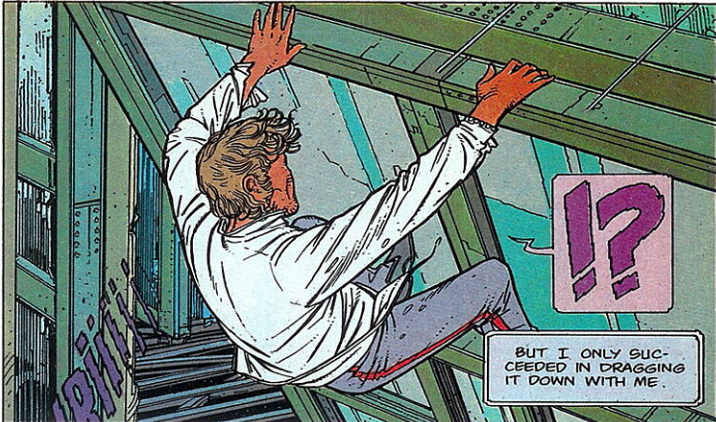
I TRIED TO CLIMB TO THE TOP OF THE BUILDING TO GET A BETTER SENSE OF MY SURROUNDINGS.







I TRIED TO HANG ON TO ONE OF THE WALLS.

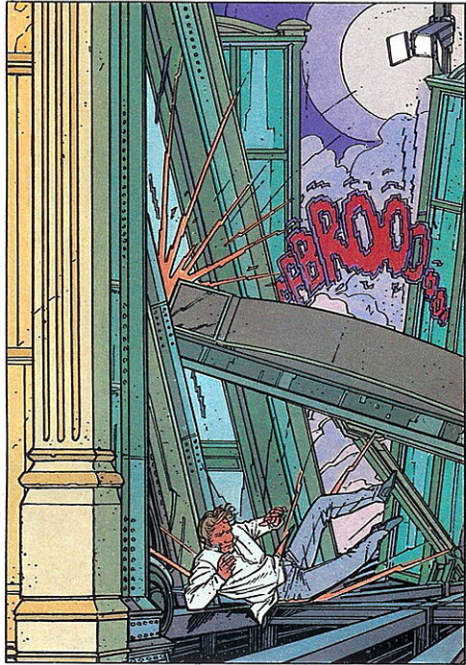


!?

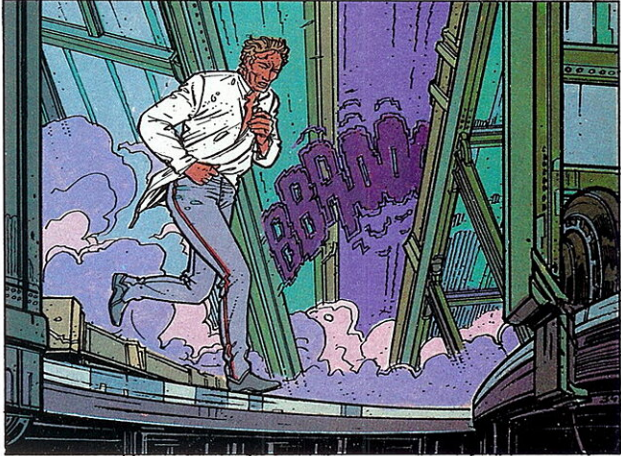
BUT I ONLY SUCCEEDED IN DRAGGING IT DOWN WITH ME.



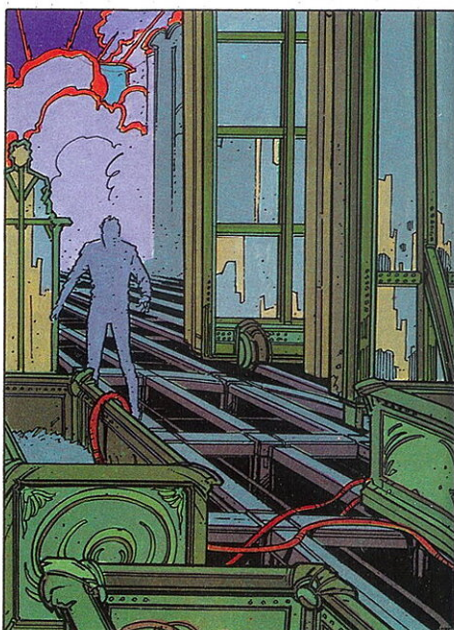
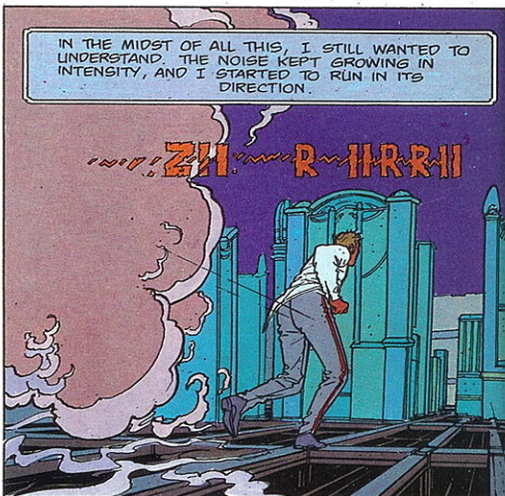
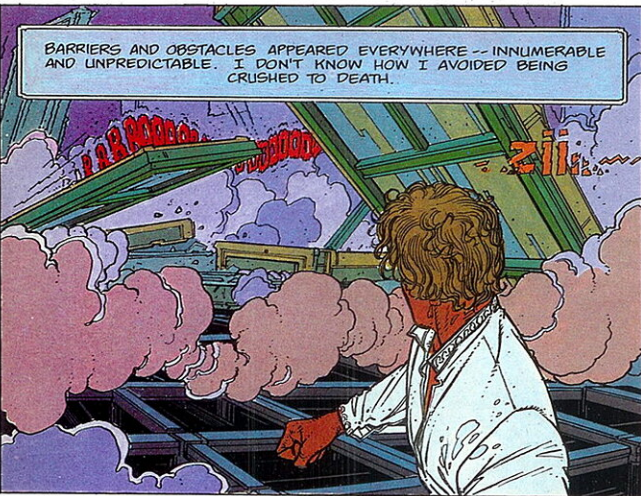
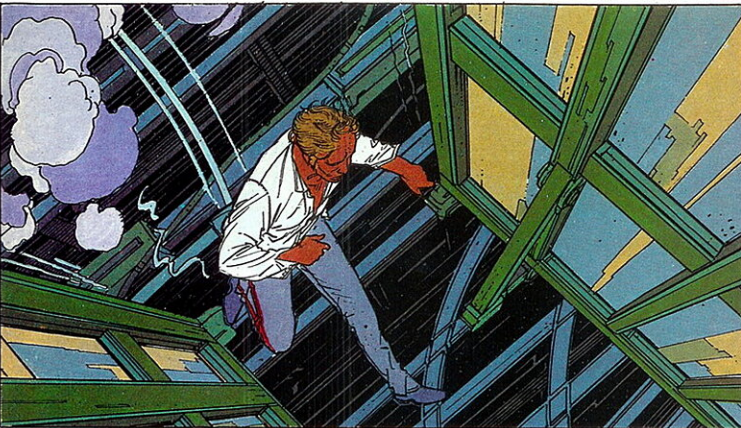
AS THE PANELS FELL, PANIC SEEMED TO BREAK LOOSE. THE WALLS STARTED TO MOVE ALL AT ONCE.



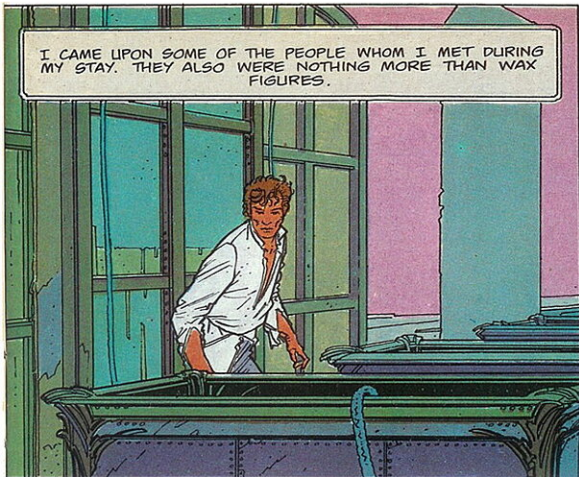
ESCAPE!! I HAD TO LEAVE RIGHT AWAY TO ESCAPE THE WORKINGS OF THIS CRAZY CITY.



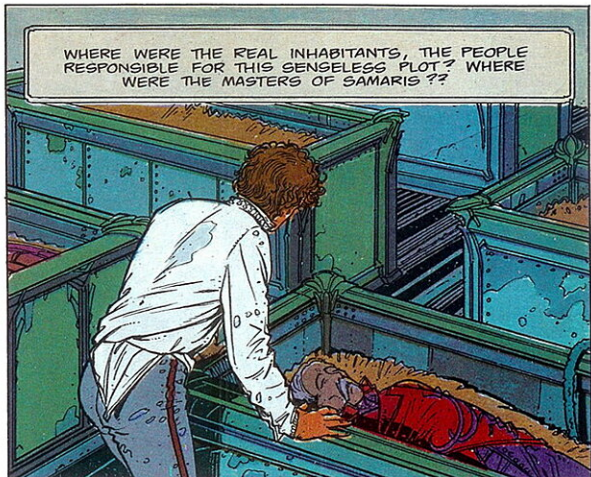
BOOM



I CAME UPON SOME OF THE PEOPLE WHOM I MET DURING MY STAY. THEY ALSO WERE NOTHING MORE THAN WAX FIGURES.



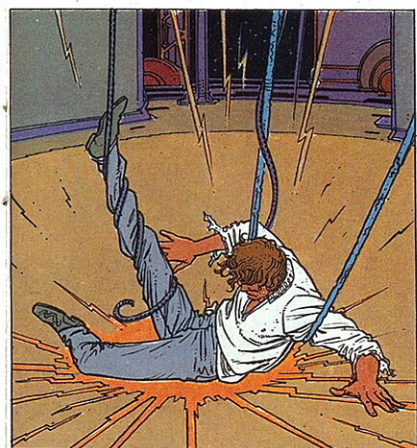
WHERE WERE THE REAL INHABITANTS, THE PEOPLE RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS SENSELESS PLOT? WHERE WERE THE MASTERS OF SAMARIS??



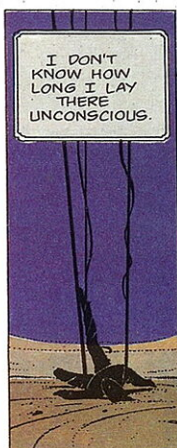
I THOUGHT I SAW CARLA IN THE DISTANCE. I TRIED TO REACH HER AND STEPPED TOO FAR....



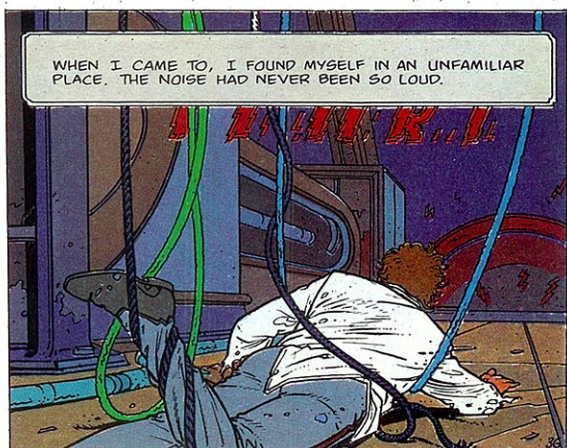
HEY!

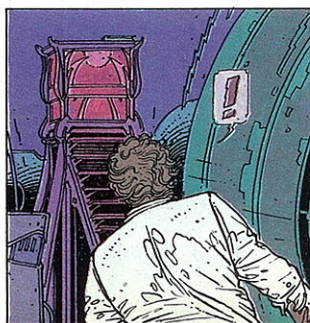
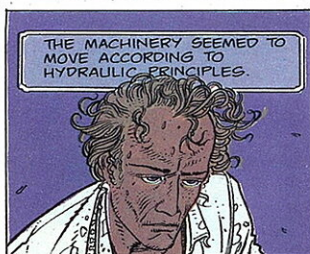
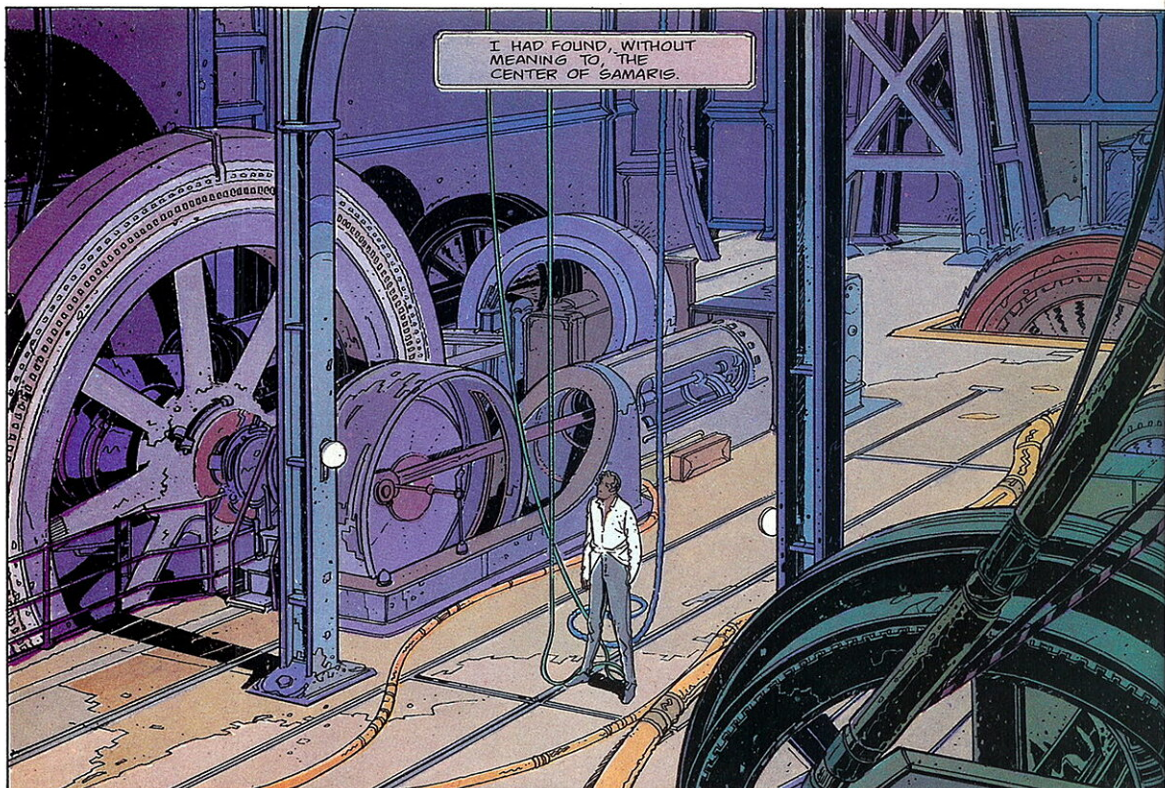


I DON'T KNOW HOW LONG I LAY THERE UNCONSCIOUS.



WHEN I CAME TO, I FOUND MYSELF IN AN UNFAMILIAR PLACE. THE NOISE HAD NEVER BEEN SO LOUD.

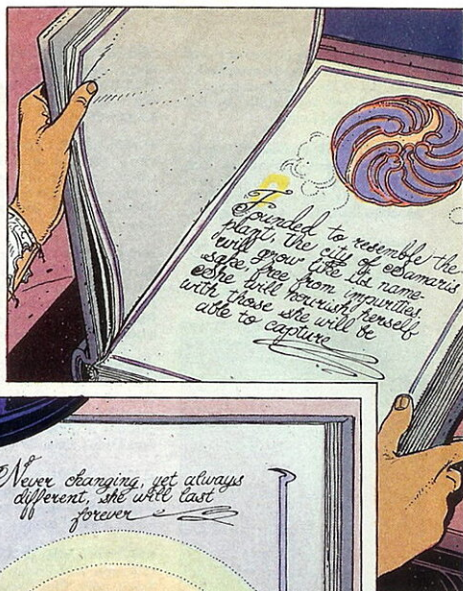




THE WALLS OF SAMARIS

by Schuiten

LAST WE READ FRANZ WAS DISCOVERING THE LONG SOUGHT AFTER SECRET OF SAMARIS. HIS DEATH DEFYING SEARCH SHOULD SOON BE OVER.



Samaris will have always been and will always be, just like the tide which rises every day.

She will seize the images of those she has captured and will make them hers.

Never changing, yet always different, she will last forever.

Day after day her roots will grow further and further.

THE TEXT WAS VERY OBSCURE AND FULL OF METAPHORS. ALL I UNDERSTOOD WAS THAT SAMARIS-- IN ORDER TO SURVIVE-- HAD TO RENEW ITS APPEARANCE CONTINUOUSLY AND DID SO BY SEIZING THE IMAGES OF THOSE SHE HAD ATTRACTED AND CAPTURED.

WHAT MUMBO JUMBO!

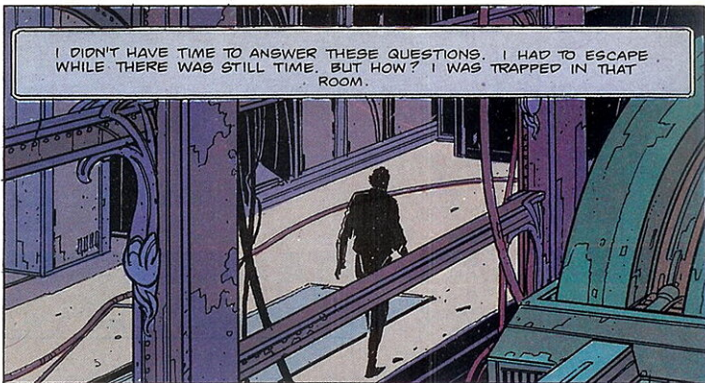
THIS SPRAWLING CITY NEEDED AN ENDLESS ARRAY OF IMAGES, IN ORDER TO SURVIVE, SPRAWLING JUST LIKE THE PLANT WHICH WAS ITS SYMBOL.

THIS COULD ALWAYS BE USEFUL.

HOW LONG HAD THIS MADNESS EXISTED?
HOW COULD IT HAVE BEEN DEVELOPED
SO EXTENSIVELY?



I DIDN'T HAVE TIME TO ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS. I HAD TO ESCAPE
WHILE THERE WAS STILL TIME. BUT HOW? I WAS TRAPPED IN THAT
ROOM.



THE ONLY ESCAPE ROUTE
WAS THROUGH THE WATER
PIPES.



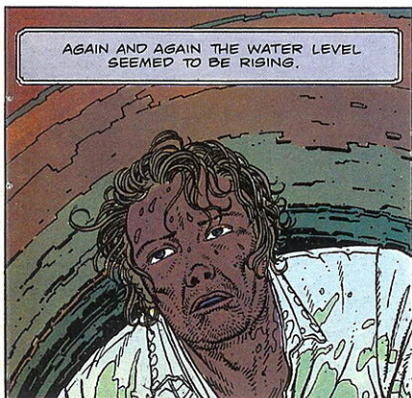
THE WATER LEVEL
HAD FALLEN.



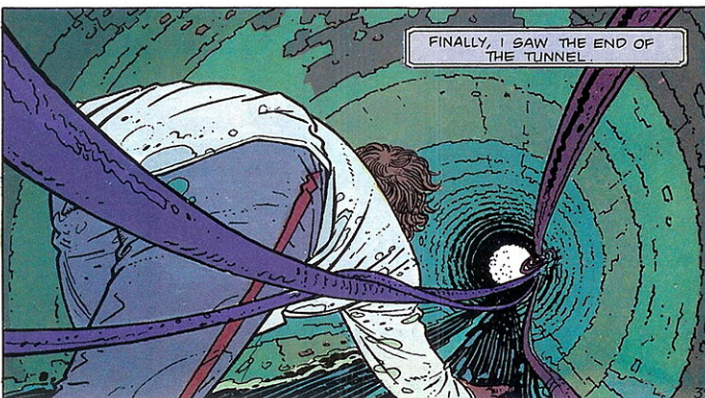
I CRAWLED FOR HOURS,
WITHOUT MUCH HOPE OF
FINDING AN EXIT.



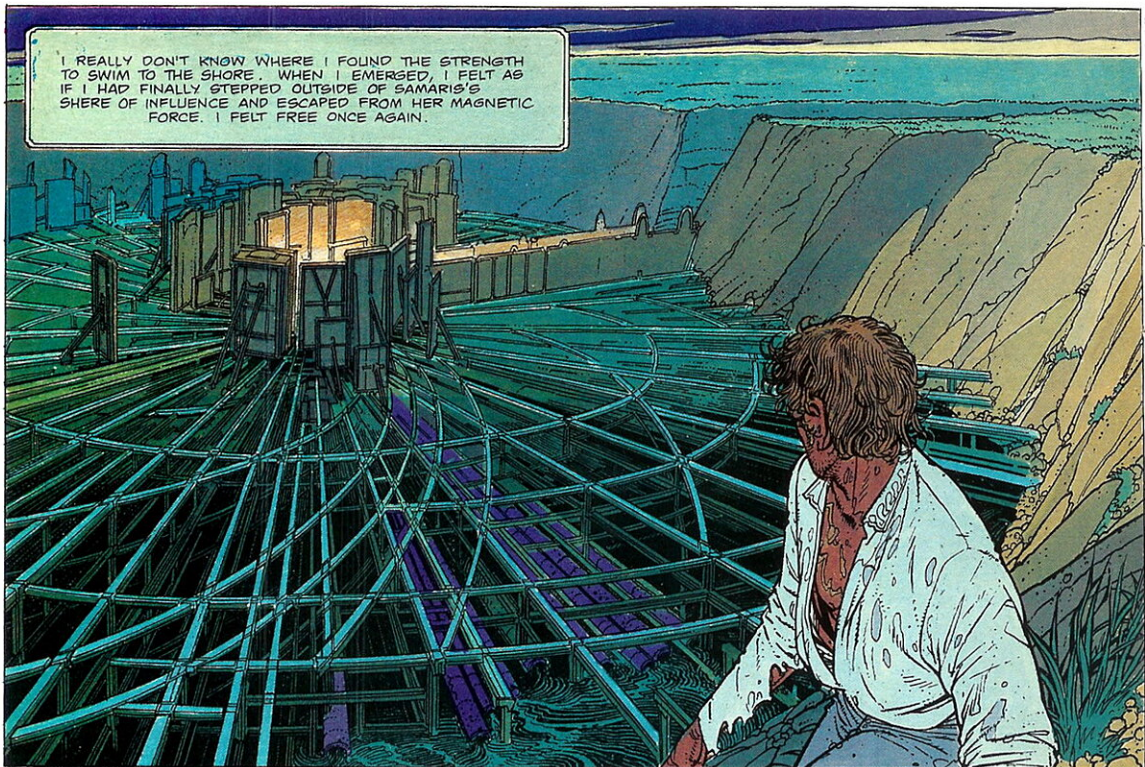
AGAIN AND AGAIN THE WATER LEVEL
SEEMED TO BE RISING.



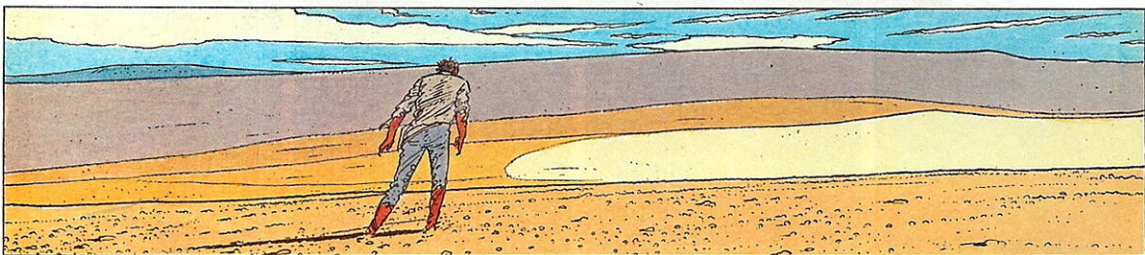
FINALLY, I SAW THE END OF
THE TUNNEL.



I REALLY DON'T KNOW WHERE I FOUND THE STRENGTH TO SWIM TO THE SHORE. WHEN I EMERGED, I FELT AS IF I HAD FINALLY STEPPED OUTSIDE OF SAMARIS'S SPHERE OF INFLUENCE AND ESCAPED FROM HER MAGNETIC FORCE. I FELT FREE ONCE AGAIN.

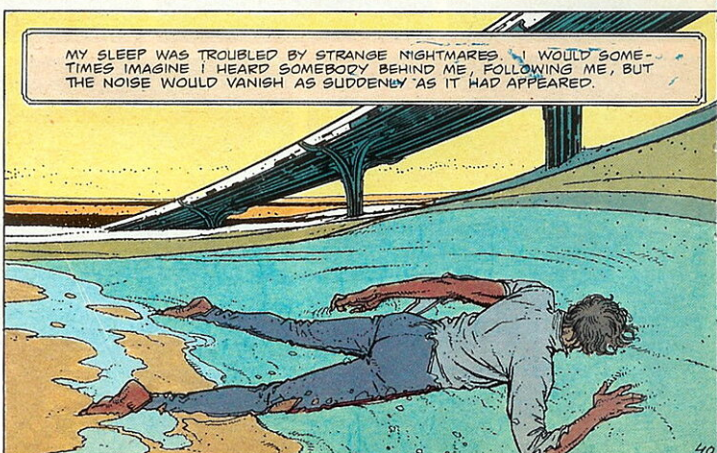


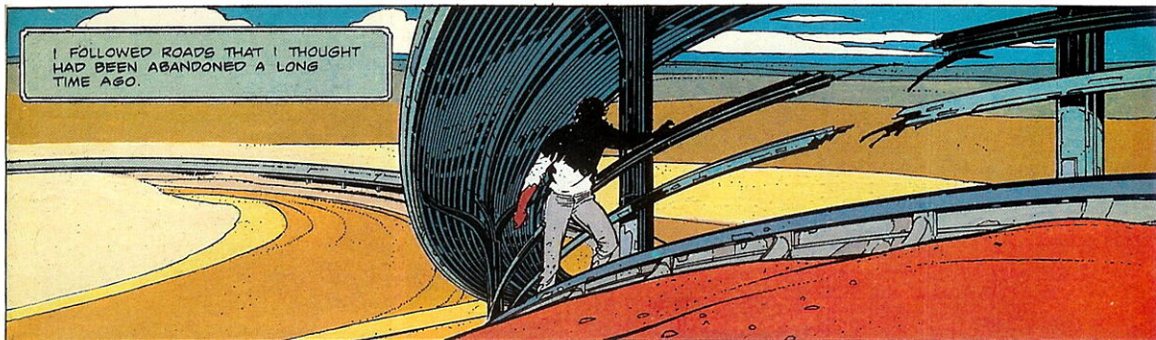
THE VOYAGE TO SAMARIS HAD BEEN VERY TIRING. THE RETURN TRIP WAS HORRIBLE.



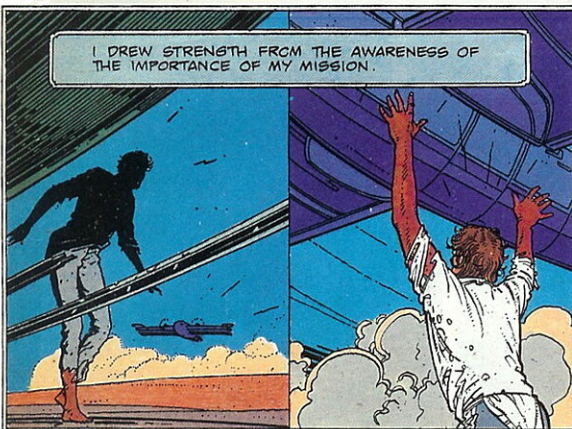
I WAS SURE I WOULD NEVER REACH MY DESTINATION. I TRIED TO GO FASTER AND WALK ALL NIGHT, BUT I WOULD COLLAPSE EXHAUSTED IN THE MORNING AND SLEEP ALL DAY.

MY SLEEP WAS TROUBLED BY STRANGE NIGHTMARES. I WOULD SOMETIMES IMAGINE I HEARD SOMEBODY BEHIND ME, FOLLOWING ME, BUT THE NOISE WOULD VANISH AS SUDDENLY AS IT HAD APPEARED.

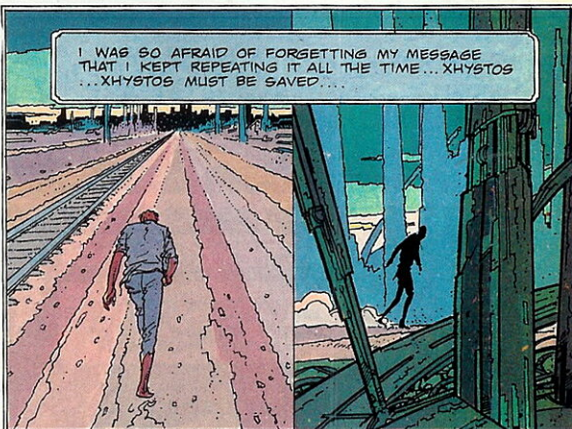




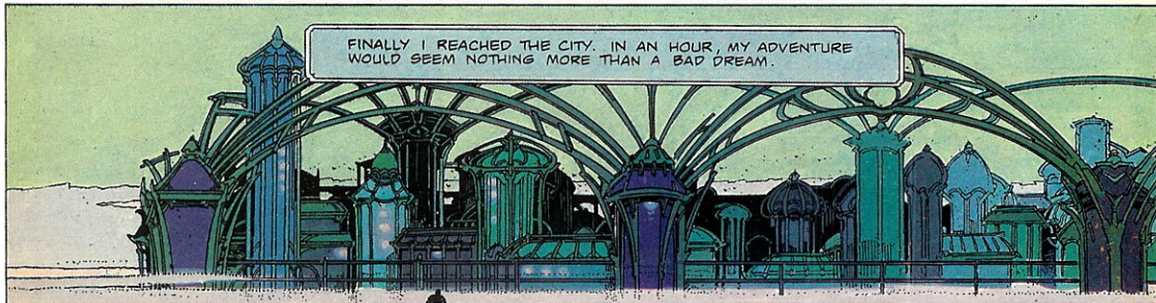
I FOLLOWED ROADS THAT I THOUGHT HAD BEEN ABANDONED A LONG TIME AGO.



I DREW STRENGTH FROM THE AWARENESS OF THE IMPORTANCE OF MY MISSION.



I WAS SO AFRAID OF FORGETTING MY MESSAGE THAT I KEPT REPEATING IT ALL THE TIME... XHYSTOS ... XHYSTOS MUST BE SAVED...



FINALLY I REACHED THE CITY. IN AN HOUR, MY ADVENTURE WOULD SEEM NOTHING MORE THAN A BAD DREAM.



I HAD LEFT MY PAPERS BEHIND. THE GUARDS MISTOOK ME FOR A DWELLER OF THE SUBURBS.

LET ME IN!! MY NAME IS FRANZ, I AM THE ENVOY FOR THE GREAT COUNCIL.



FINALLY, THEY LET ME ENTER THE CITY.

WHO IS HE?

I DON'T KNOW, A BUM FOR SURE.

I WENT STRAIGHT TOWARDS THE GREAT COUNCIL BUILDING.

I WASN'T ABLE TO RECOGNIZE MY SURROUNDINGS. THE CITY HAD COMPLETELY CHANGED IN THE FEW MONTHS I HAD BEEN AWAY.

HOLD IT! YOU CAN'T ENTER THIS BUILDING.

I HAVE TO SPEAK TO THE GREAT COUNCIL. I HAVE AN URGENT MESSAGE. IT IS OF THE UTMOST IMPORTANCE!

THEY DIDN'T LET ME IN. I SAT DOWN IN FRONT OF THE DOOR AND WAITED.

SURE, SURE!

THE GREAT COUNCIL HAS BETTER THINGS TO DO.

WHAT DOES HE WANT?

HE WANTS TO SPEAK TO THE COUNCIL.

HA, HA, HA, HA

HA

HA, HA, HA

HA, HA, HA!



...I WAITED FOR TWO WHOLE DAYS.



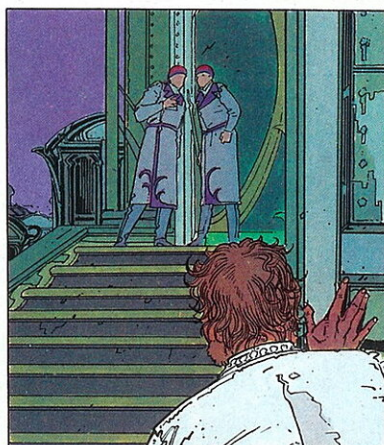
WELL, YOU'RE STILL HERE?



MY NAME IS FRANZ, AND I WAS SENT TO SAMARIS ON A SPECIAL MISSION... I HAVE TO SPEAK TO THE GREAT COUNCIL.



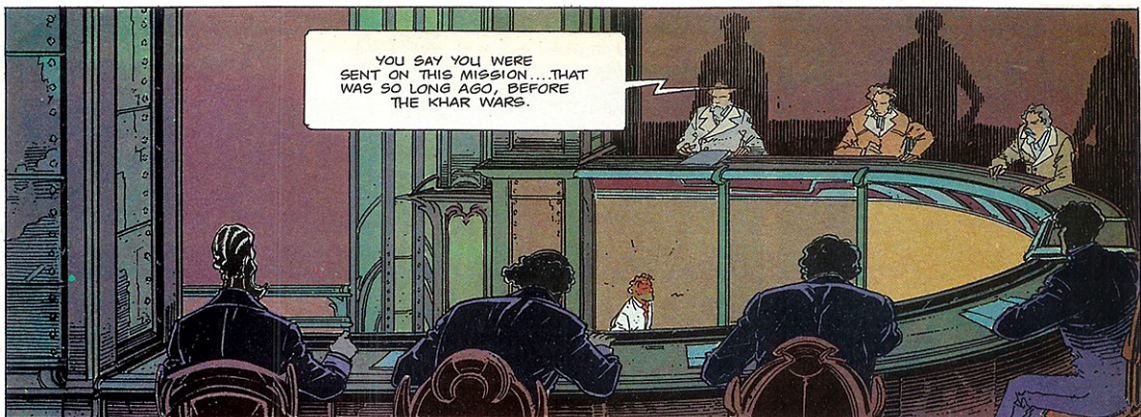
SA...SAMARIS?



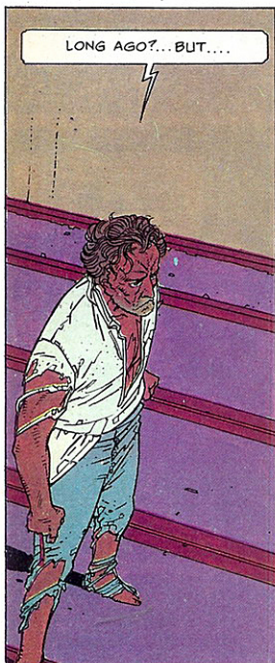
COME IN, THE GREAT COUNCIL WANTS TO SEE YOU. BUT MAKE IT SHORT.



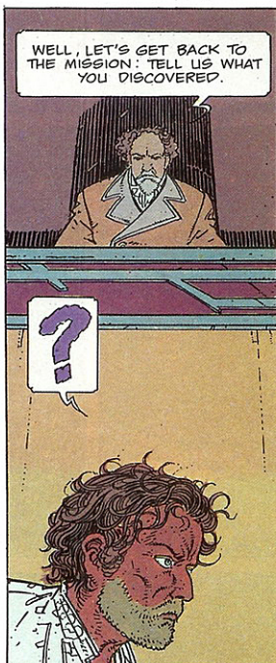
YOU HAVE ASKED TO SEE US... SPEAK NOW! WHAT DO YOU HAVE TO TELL US?



YOU SAY YOU WERE SENT ON THIS MISSION... THAT WAS SO LONG AGO, BEFORE THE KHAR WARS.



LONG AGO?... BUT....



WELL, LET'S GET BACK TO THE MISSION: TELL US WHAT YOU DISCOVERED.

?



WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH HIM?

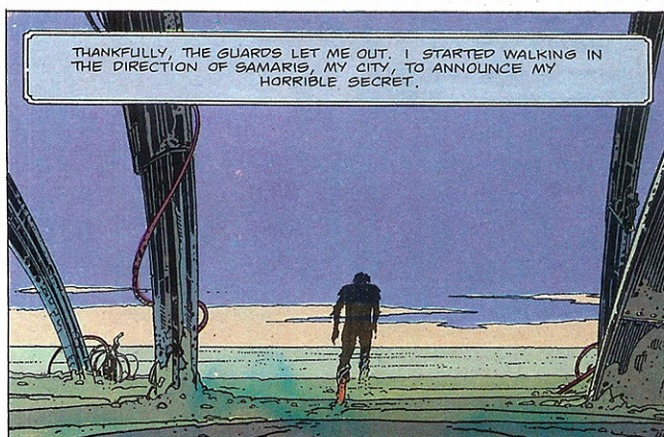
I UNDERSTOOD JUST IN TIME, AS SOON AS I RECOGNIZED THE PLANT. AT THE VERY LAST MINUTE I WAS ABLE TO ESCAPE FROM THE LETHAL TRAP IN WHICH I HAD BEEN ALL TOO READY TO FALL.



FOR THE LAST TIME: SPEAK!

NO... I DON'T KNOW... IT REALLY ISN'T IMPORTANT.

XHYSTOS! XHYSTOS WAS THE SPRAWLING CITY. I RAN OUT IN HASTE.



THANKFULLY, THE GUARDS LET ME OUT. I STARTED WALKING IN THE DIRECTION OF SAMARIS, MY CITY, TO ANNOUNCE MY HORRIBLE SECRET.



